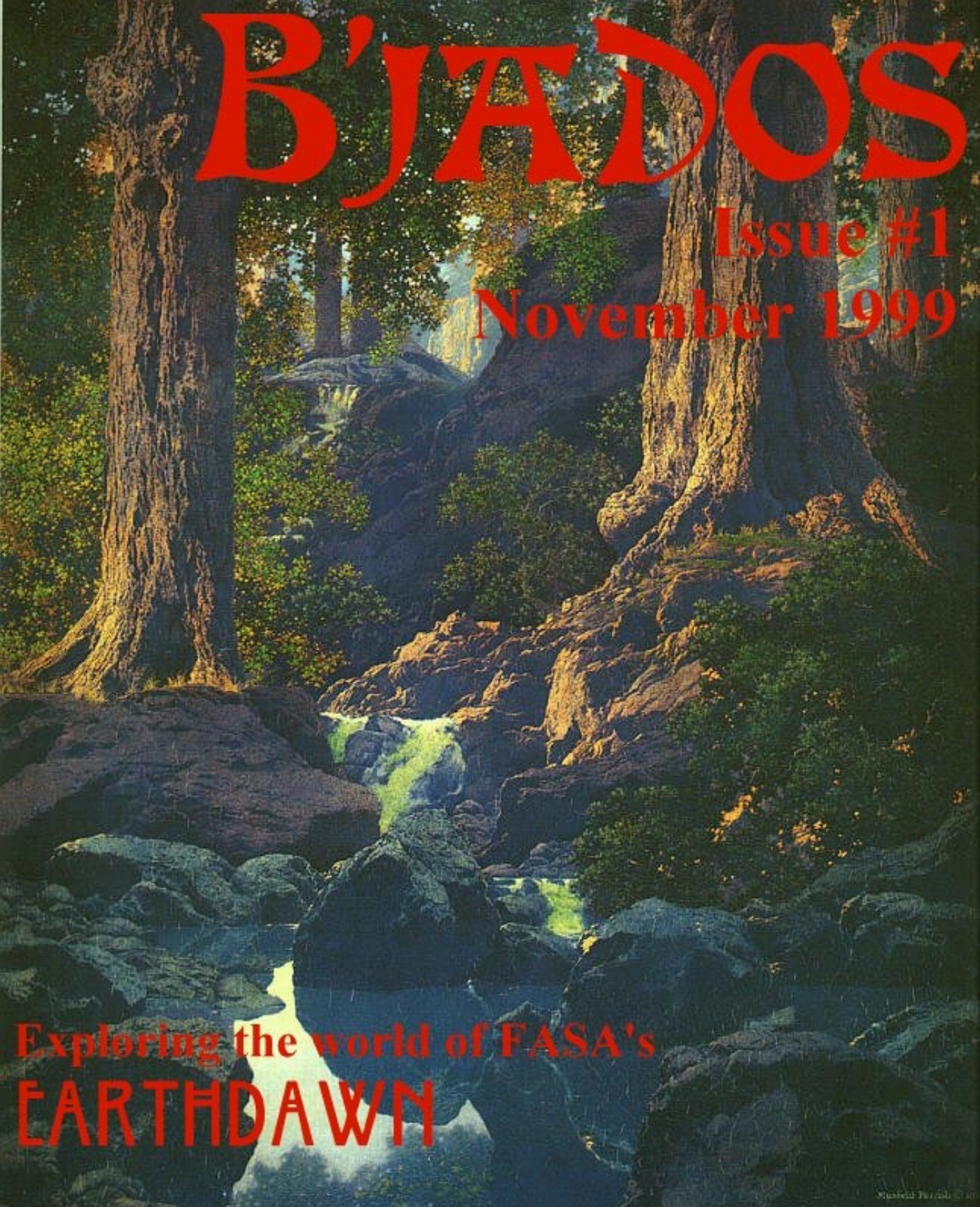




B'JADOS

Issue #1
November 1999

Exploring the world of FASA's
EARTHDAWN

***A Publication
Devoted to
FASA's
Earthdawn
Fantasy
Roleplaying
Game***

**Volume #1
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B'JADOS

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From The Editor:

Welcome to the first issue of *B'jados*, the successor to *Earthdawn Journal*. Thank you, everyone who has contributed to this magazine thus far, and thank you to everyone with pending submissions and material we've yet to see. If it wasn't for you, the people who write and draw the contents, and the people who buy and play *Earthdawn*, this magazine would not exist.

We're not getting a lot of feedback. If you tell us what sort of magazine you'd like to see, we'll do our best to provide it. You can contact us through e-mail (see the Contents page), through our Web site, or through surface mail.

We also need quality submissions. *B'jados* needs art and articles that have not previously been published, and that includes appearing on a web site. If in doubt, contact us.

Again, thank you for making *B'jados* what it is.

Andrew Ragland
Editor, *Earthdawn Journal*

How Are We Doing?

As of Issue #9, *Sword of the Knight* discontinued the response forms in the middle of the issue. Many thanks to Lee DeBoer, who was enterprising enough to send his response via e-mail, and thus got a free issue. We're working on an online response form; more news on that story as it develops.

Lee's Opinion of EDJ #9:

Heritage	5
Elementalism	4
Illusion	5
Nethermancy	5
Wizardry	4
Sympathetic Infusion	5
Swamp Creatures	4
Night Crawler	4
Mystic Warrior Knacks	5
Guilds and Societies	5
Artwork(Arlie Adams)	4
Artwork(Earl Clay)	5
Artwork(Alex Dai)	3
Artwork(Kevin Montanaro)	3
Overall Satisfaction	5

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Submissions: We are accepting articles and artwork for future issues. All submissions must include your name, address and Social Security Number. Hardcopy submissions must be typewritten or printed out clearly, and be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want your materials returned. Electronic submissions are accepted at araglan@us.ibm.com in standard IBM or Macintosh document and graphic formats. Hardcopy submissions should be sent to the editorial address. Please see the Contents page.

THIS SPACE FOR RENT

POTRZEBIE!

Siridfaath

by Kathleen E. Czechowski

It was around a year ago that I came across Siridfaath, a caravan town founded by members of a former adventuring group. Located between the Throal and Caucavic mountain ranges, in the forest along the Serpent River, it straddles the caravan route from Haven to Throal. A good deal of traffic passed through during my two weeks in residence.

I had been a passenger on the Syrtis trade vessel *Eye of Shivos* at the time, journeying across Barsaive via the Serpent and its tributaries. My itinerary was, admittedly, less than well planned.

The trip began outside Kratas. I will not go into details. Suffice it to say that the cards were not falling well for a group of trolls, and I found myself obliged to quit town with great alacrity. Fortunately, the *Eye of Shivos* was docked on the Tylon outside of the city's limits. The captain was indeed gratified to see me, as I had lost a game of dice to her some time ago. After paying her what I owed, I purchased passage on the ship for as far as it was going.

The Tylon carried us to the main body of the Serpent, and the ship fought the current most of the way. As we came around the Throal Mountains, Captain Kostbera informed me that the last stop was to be Siridfaath. I was welcome to continue back down the river, of course, and if I cared to engage in a few games of chance...

Noting the gleam in her eye, and remembering the state of my purse, I opted to disembark and go into town. Perhaps I would find an eager new audience and again fill my dwindling coffers. To my delight, I found the people friendly and open, but when I asked some of them about where to find places in town, the answer always came back the same: 'Go see Gwyndaff.' So go to see Gwyndaff I did, after inquiring for directions.

Gwyndaff proved to be a devoted questor of Garlen and a powerful warrior, as well as one of the founders of the town. She, along with Veit the ork

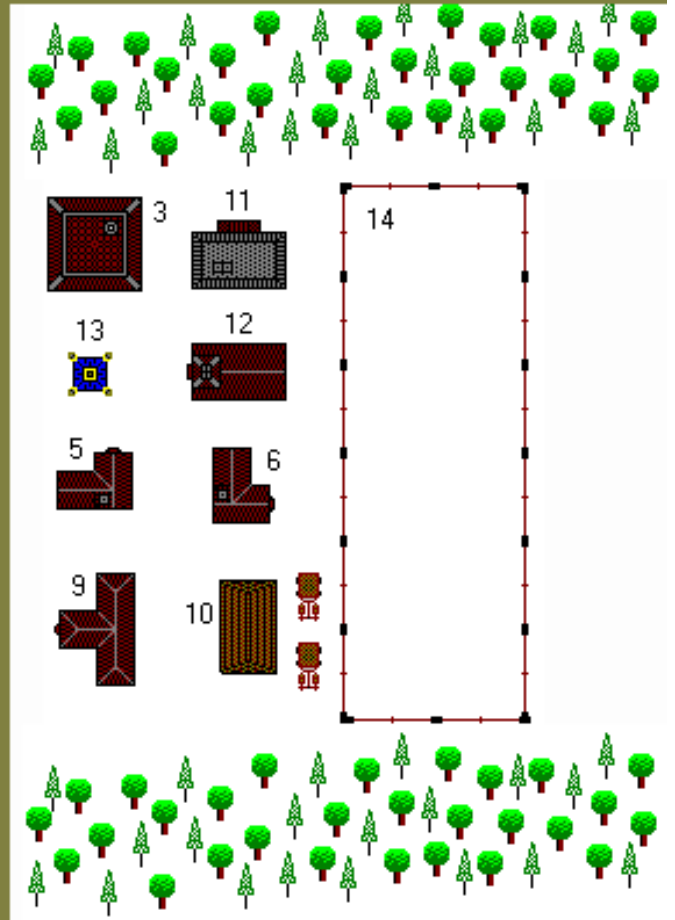
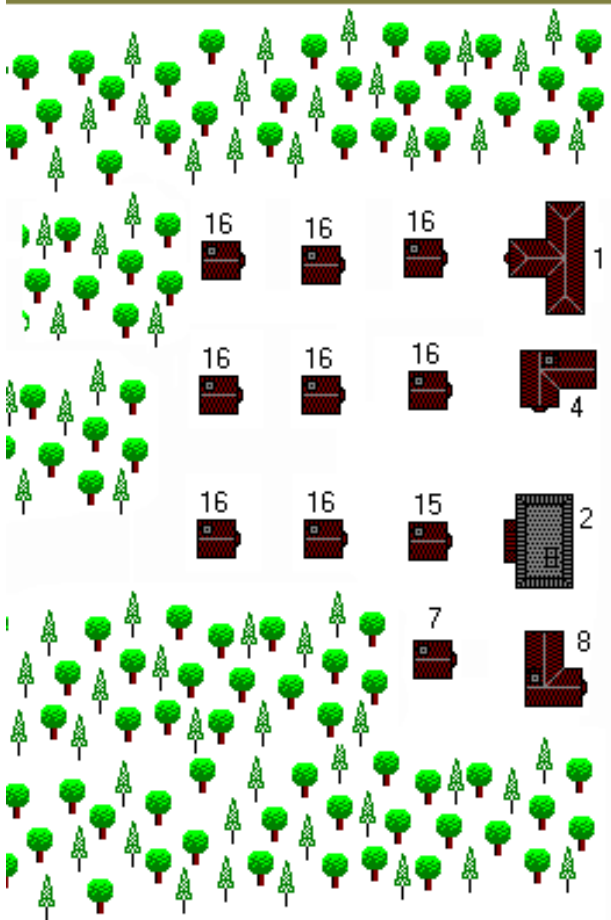
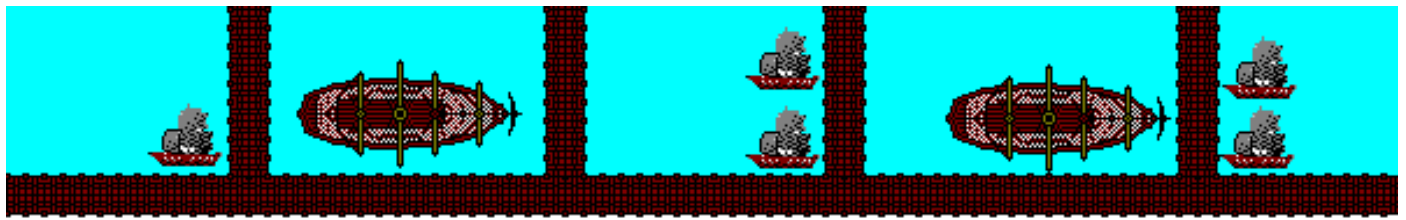
nethermancer (now deceased), Roxane the dwarven wizard, Jeth the archer and Issaren the weaponsmith, founded Siridfaath upon their retirement five years ago. At that time, it had been a struggling caravan stop, with only a few ramshackle buildings and rickety piers. Despite the constant flux of traders and merchants, the few Namegivers who lived there were considering pulling up stakes when Gwyndaff and her fellow adepts arrived.

Veit the Eloquent had been born in the shantytown. Though his own family had long since moved on, it was his desire to help those who had been his friends in childhood. He, along with Gwyndaff, Jeth, Issaren, and Roxane, put much time, money and energy into Siridfaath, hiring work crews from Throal and calling in favors from merchants and other adepts to help with the work. Within a year, the small outpost grew into the caravan town it is today.

It is still a small town, and the resident population is low. There is a certain sameness about most of the buildings, and this makes it difficult to find a particular place quickly. Gwyndaff was most helpful in showing me around. However, when asking about specific places, I often got more information than I bargained for -- she is apparently quite the gossip. In fact, she refers to herself, and is referred to, as the "Unofficial Siridfaath Traders' Guild."

Here is a bit of what she told me about the town of Siridfaath, abridged for those with more delicate sensibilities. (By the way, the Name of the town is pronounced 'seeridfathe,' with the last syllable being aspirated -- in other words, the word 'father' without the 'r'. The townsfolk are disturbingly quick to correct such mispronunciations). This information will prove useful, should the reader happen to come across the town. At the very least, you won't have to spend most of a day with Gwyndaff.

*Nossuray Zan
troubador of Jerrus*



- | | |
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Trennary's Mercantile and Leathers

General Store and Leather Goods

This shop is operated by Trennary, a male human merchant. Often seemingly nervous, he is a canny opponent when negotiating for goods, and uses his

reputation as a neurotic shopkeeper to good effect. He keeps his shelves well stocked with basics, such as trail rations and waterskins, and also has a modest selection of leather goods, including armor for a wide range of Namegivers, even windlings!

Trennary often hires trustworthy messengers to take contracts to other cities for him, as he dislikes leaving his shop in other hands. He has several live-in helpers residing on the second floor of the store.

Trennary is currently unmarried. He was engaged at one point, but his prospective bride soon tired of his constant fussing about the shop.

Issaren's Forge

Armor and Metal Goods

A male dwarven weaponsmith of the Seventh Circle, solemn and a strong believer in the value of

hard work, Issaren specializes in impact weapons, like maces, flails, and warhammers. He does, however, do a more than serviceable job creating other types of weapons. Prices for these are often slightly less than the same item sold in Bartertown.

While a member of the brotherhood of weaponsmiths, he is very careful about who he lets use his forge. If he is uncertain of someone's abilities, or doubtful of their sincerity, the prospective smith may find his every move scrutinized by this formidable dwarf. Under no circumstances will he allow a non-weaponsmith to use his forge. Also, he is difficult to haggle with. Chances are, if someone tries this with him, he'll automatically raise the price. He feels that if someone wastes his time in such a manner, they should pay for it. To his mind, his prices are low enough as is. Naturally, he and Trennary don't get along too well.

Issaren is married to Roxane, but Jeth and I rarely ever see or hear anything about her. She often goes up to Throal for several months at a time, and has neglected to keep in contact with the rest of us. I have often asked after Roxy's health, but he has generally acknowledged the comment with a grunt and a short nod, then returned to his hammering. Infernally frustrating, it is.

(After talking with other townspeople, I discovered that Roxane is not taking her retirement as seriously as Issaren. On Gwyndaff's advice, Roxy has not been going to Throal, but instead is continuing her adventuring career, without her husband. This has caused a rift between the two former compatriots, and Gwyndaff is unaccountably reticent about the exact situation. Tales in Bartertown have it that Roxy is currently poking around the Thunder Mountains, leading a fledgling group of adepts. The wizard's younger brother is also a member of this group. -- 'Kaj)

Fenthon's Bed and Board Inn and Tavern

Fenthon is a male human innkeeper and bartender, a large and florid man with a ready smile. His inn is small, but comfortable, located just across from the town well. The daily menu varies depending upon what his regulars bring in from their hunting expeditions. Venison may generally be expected on any given day, since the woods nearby are full of deer. His selection of ales is excellent, though limited, and his specialty is his own cinnamon ale, which he brews in his basement. The spice is not included in the

brewing -- it merely indicates the color of the drink.

Regulars at this establishment include Cotson, a muscular, balding male dwarf who hunts with regularity, and Amalen, a fair, if wary, female human. Her wariness stems from her previous years as a slave in a brothel. Fenthon is a bit sweet on his barmaid Amalen. If any of Fenthon's customers look like they are giving her trouble, he will ask them politely to leave. If this is to no avail, he will have a group of five or six of his other customers toss out the offender. At any given time, he may have an adept of up to the Seventh Circle in his establishment, since Fenthon's is popular with traders from the Serpent River as a resting spot and watering hole. Prices here for rooms are consistent with a guild inn, with the same amenities.

The Amberglass Tavern

The proprietor is Xendri Kharg, a female dwarf, conscientious of her race's tradition of hospitality, and a crack shot with a crossbow, as many who started fights in her place have discovered. She generally aims for loose clothing, not for injury or fatality. A second shot is not generally needed, after she calls her shot and hits. This bold maneuver usually prevents, or at least postpones, further aggression.

While not lavishly decorated or burdened with frivolities, Xendri's tavern is very quiet and comfortable, with modest prices for food and drink. Like Fenthon, she too has a house brand of ale, which she calls Amber. Like Issaren, her husband Burath is often gone for months at a time, but at least it's well known that he is currently studying in Throal, intent on becoming an advocate in the courts.

Regulars here include Janith and Kaillia D'Raza, windling Third Circle beastmaster and Fifth Circle troubadour, respectively. Janith may often be found prowling around with her smoke-gray cat Mist. Kaillia is a fair troubadour, but plays a rather unusual instrument -- shaped like a harp, its strings are tuned so finely that she can coax beautiful music out of the instrument merely by fanning her wings across them. She calls the instrument an aeolus.

Sadina's Fine Gems Jeweler and Exchange

This store is owned and operated by Sadina Glannorand, a female elf. She is tall, and always scrupulously well-dressed, but there is a lingering

redness in the tips of her fingers -- no doubt from the grinding wheel. Her skill at creating jewelry is superb, as is her selection of gems, fortified by a regular influx of these supplies from her contacts upriver. She can make jewelry to order, but prefers for the customer to choose the gems and metals and let her take care of the rest. Her work is desirable, though her Name is relatively unknown. In fact, there has been word of her work selling in Bartertown for more than twice what she herself has charged.

Also an exchanger, she usually charges 10% when converting silver to gems or vice versa, and also when exchanging pre-Scourge coinage for current denominations. Sometimes she works very closely with Jeth, the archer. *(At this point, Gwyndaff winked. -- Kaj)*

Sign of the Clothyard Fletcher, Bowyer, and Carpenter

Sixth Circle archer adept Jeth, a rather quiet elf, owns and operates this establishment. Of the four of us still living, Jeth has adapted best to retirement. I myself still feel the call of the road sometimes, but Jeth is quite deaf to it. I envy that...

His prices are a bit higher than normal, but he usually embellishes the wood of his products with his own fanciful carvings -- the artwork is worth the extra silver. He can and will do special orders, but charges one and a half times the regular price and up, depending upon the complexity of the item and any special requests -- like using specific types of wood, or adding gems. The latter he usually has Sadina help with, since it is her fort .

Residence of Ngado Fairhand Sage, Scribe, Librarian, and Alchemist

Ngado Fairhand is a female dwarfen Travelled Scholar of Eighth Circle, elderly and blind in the right eye. The Name 'Fairhand' stems from an alchemical accident she once had, which stained her hands snow-white, as well as afflicting her right eye with the white blindness. Despite her condition, though, she is an excellent researcher, and will often look up obscure information on an item or legend for the cost of only some company for the afternoon. She will often ask those who use her services for their stories, then later painstakingly add them to her library, which is decorated with mementos of her husband Ishto, who died eight years ago. She moved to Siridfaath shortly after his death.

Her home is quite comfortable, and the ever-

present tea is a special blend supplied to her by a t'skrang trader of her acquaintance, for whom she once discovered information on a ring which he had acquired. Her alchemist's skills extend to making Last Chance potions, but she generally has only one of



these available at any given time. She usually keeps in stock ten Booster potions and three Healing, but those numbers may vary in either direction. She usually marks up the price a bit from Bartertown standard, but if the purchaser stays for tea and conversation, she may decrease the price.

Spool's Tailor and Seamstress

Mirced the tailor is also the mayor of Siridfaath. Elected several years ago while he was out of town at a customer's abode, he nonetheless has endeavored to keep the town in order, despite the constant influx of tradesmen, sailors and captains from the river a short distance away. One can often find his wife Nabani, and sons Maerlig and Jathon, enjoying the music at the Amberglass, when not helping at the shop. Mirced and Nabani are quite crafty with a needle. The quality of his garments is quite nice, and he usually sells to his friends for less than similar items in Bartertown.

He can usually do special orders as long as he is given enough time. Prices for these items depend on exactly what special qualities the customer wants, but figure a bit more than retail, unless you're in good with him.

How can one become his friend? It helps to be nice, orderly, quiet, volunteer for the watch once in a while, and break up any fights that happen to start. As one might expect, Xendri Kharg and he are rather good friends.

Panther's Head Inn

A dwarf named Kirseh is proprietor here. She keeps somewhat to herself, but runs a good, clean establishment, and charges fair rates. Room prices are similar to an average merchant inn, but as this is

simply an inn and not a tavern as well, she does not provide food. However, she and Xendri are good friends, and if you stay with Kirseh, she will give you a voucher for 10% off a meal at the Amberglass. She also has many connections with certain people in Barsaive, ones who know where things might be found.

Siridfaath Overland Messenger and Transport Services

Owned and operated by Lucien Orond, a dwarf, often referred to as my partner in crime. Not that he ever reads the messages that go in and out (unless he himself has to write them, of course!) but he is a good listener, and pretty quick at picking up inferred information. Plus, the dwarfs, orks, and t'skrang who run his river and land transports always make full reports when they return, including any stray remarks overheard from the passengers. My life wouldn't be half so interesting without him!

His rates are average, but if you're in a hurry, he often works as a go-between with the captains of drakkars -- for a small fee, of course. Generally, it ends up being 10% of the negotiated passage fee, or a flat 10 silver if the captain refuses passengers. This option is only available if there happens to be a drakkar about, of course.

He has a wife, Graffia; two sons, Teyar and Alkov; and two daughters, Mesari and Mirielle. He also has an absolutely debilitating fear of water, a result of nearly drowning in his younger years. He can drink a mug of it with no difficulty, but will not set foot near a pond or river, not for all the orichalcum in the world. Heaven forbid he should ever have to go to Urupa!

Burdock's Glazery Glass Goods and Pottery

Never walk into this place in the middle of the day, if you can help it. The man's stamina is amazing -- temperatures in that place must be hotter than the inside of a bread oven, because of the kilns and such. Almost



all of his work is special order, but if you need empty vials for one reason or another, he usually has a few on hand, for about five coppers to two silver, depending on size and materials. A leathery, parched little human, he is almost always found at work, but rarely speaks. Most think he's a mute, but I have heard him talking to a certain dwarf...no, not Lucien (though I wish it were!). Let's just say that I know who this dwarf's boss is, and Burdock always immediately closes shop when the two of them meet.

(I tried to wangle more information about the last comment, but she refused to discuss it further, instead changing the subject. It was practically the only thing she wouldn't talk more about. -- Kaj)

Shrine of Garlen

Operated by yours truly, resident Questor and inveterate gossip. Currently, I am Sixth Circle as a warrior, and have been trained as a physician. I've been a questor of Garlen for about two years, and have had Zoen, a troll friend, as my assistant for one year. He acts as my second, helping with less-severe injuries and illnesses if I happen to be busy.

Many townspeople can be found in the shrine, but not usually for treatment. They visit to catch up on the latest gossip, which I gladly provide. Many also come in who are just passing through -- t'skrang traders and other river people. In fact, I have often been referred to as the "unofficial Trader's Guild." Ngado is kind enough to provide the shrine with potions and salves at near cost. I'm always interested in hearing the latest news, so drop on by...

(Gwyndaff's reasons for retirement were unclear. I asked around at other places, and heard many stories, but the consensus seems to be this. Shortly after the construction of the town, Veit was bitten by a rat and contracted a deadly disease. He weakened day by day, and though Gwyndaff was trained as a physician -- her father was one -- she could not help Veit. He died two months later, after extracting a promise from her to "take care of the town." She has continued her training as a physician, but she has not set one foot outside of Siridfaath. -- Kaj)

Town Well

There is nothing spectacular about this well. It is the sole supply of fresh water for the town. Work has recently begun to install a windlass with many buckets along an endless loop of rope. It will be a blessing when it is completed. Hauling up one bucket at a time can be inconvenient when I have suffering patients on

my hands.

Livestock Pens and Stables

Placed downwind from the shrine, thank the Passions. The usual mounts and draft animals may be purchased here, and maybe once a year, there will be a trained griffin or falcon for sale. The prices for these unusual beasts are almost double what may be asked elsewhere, which still may be cheaper than in Throal or Bartertown, if one takes into consideration the fact that bidding wars sometimes start over these creatures, when available at all. The prices for mounts like horses and ponies and such are quite a bit more reasonable. Generally, they are about one and a half times retail, but since tack is always thrown in, the price evens out a bit.

Docks and Wharfs

Though not attached to the town proper, they are the most vital contributor to the survival of the town. Siridfaath is capable of housing about 500 to 900 Namegivers at any one time. There are only about 50 full-time residents, like myself. The majority of Namegivers in the town are an assortment of caravaners, crews of trade, pleasure and military ships, adepts on their way to and from Bartertown or Haven, and other itinerants.

There are slip spaces for 10 craft, plus 10 airships. There is no cost for docking, but any damage done must be paid for, and ships may not remain longer than two days in a row. This last stipulation is not as harsh as it sounds: most ships are here only for restocking and to offload cargo, which takes little time. If, however, the ship wishes to remain longer, the captain must obtain a writ of permission from Mirced, and pay fifty silver for each week that they stay. Portions of a week left unused are not refunded. Other special situations are on a case by case basis.

I found Siridfaath to be a delightful place, if a little too dull at times for my tastes. I soon moved on elsewhere for a game of cards, but do plan on visiting again.

Nossuray Uvan

The Well

by Kathleen E. Czechowski

In **The Well**, the characters encounter a strange creature and a mysterious corpse while attempting to rescue a dwarf child. This adventure occurs in the town of Siridfaath. It is a simple, linear adventure intended for a group of six to eight First Circle adepts, and can easily be finished in an evening. It is designed as a beginning adventure, though it can be easily modified for fewer low-Circle adepts, or for higher Circle adepts. The characters do not necessarily even need to know each other at the beginning for the adventure to be successful.

Plot Synopsis

While traveling through Barsaive, the characters make a stopover in a close-knit community Named Siridfaath, which lies along a caravan route between Bartertown and Haven, near a crook in the Serpent River, in the forests between the Throal and Caucavic mountains. They are enjoying a little relaxation at a local tavern when a hysterical dwarf rushes in, begging anyone near to save his daughter, who has fallen in the town well.

When the characters reach the well, they look in, and discover she is nowhere in evidence. Taking a closer look, they descend into the well, and find that there is a hole in the wall of the shaft, which they investigate.

The hole is an entry into a submerged tunnel, which leads into a cavern carved by an underground river. The river has partially receded, enough so to create dry passages. Upon emerging from the water, they find some tiny, half-dried footprints, leading to where the tunnel branches off. During the search of the branches, they hear a faint scream, coming from the center passage.

After determining the direction of the cry, they head toward it, and encounter a corkscrew of a path, which they head down, avoiding the two holes in the

floor of the end cavern. Examining the holes, they find one that is likely to be the one the girl went down. Once they reach the bottom, they find that the tunnel is lined with a strange substance, similar to silk, and spy sunlight ahead.

They soon determine the sunlight effect is a ruse, and combat a strange creature -- a scintillant spider. Once it is defeated, the group locates the cocoon which holds the child, paralyzed, but still breathing, as well as finding a strange, withered corpse.

The group returns to the surface with the girl, to the adulation of the town's inhabitants--their first taste of legend.

A Cry For Help

Overview

The adventure begins when all the characters are in Fenthon's Bed and Board, an inn in the trading post of Siridfaath. While relaxing in the tavern, they are interrupted by the entrance of a hysterical dwarf Named Lucien Orond, whose daughter Mirielle has fallen into the well while playing.

A Cry For Help cuts right to the presence of all the characters in the tavern. If this is a group's first adventure, the gamemaster may wish to let the characters wander through the town, allowing them to purchase goods or talk to some of the townsfolk.

Another option is for the gamemaster to devise smaller, individualized encounters explaining how each character reached the town, in the event that the characters do not know each other. While it is not necessary to do this, it may aid beginning players in the world of Earthdawn become comfortable with the setting.

Setting the Stage

Once everyone is comfortably ensconced in the tavern, read the following aloud, or paraphrase:

For a trading post tavern, Fenthon's Bed and Board is quiet this afternoon. There are a few other

Behind the Scenes

The dwarf is Lucien Orond, proprietor of a local transport and messenger service. While he was dealing with a client, he momentarily looked away from his four-year old daughter. When he turned his attention back to her seconds later, she had vanished. Panicked, he looked all over for her, finally spotting her just as she had climbed up the wall surrounding the town well. He waved at her to get down, but she was too far away to understand what his gesticulating meant. She waved back, and losing her balance, fell into the



customers, including a muscular, balding man who only moments ago dragged in a field-dressed deer, presented it to the bartender, and sat down to a glass of ale. A wary looking blond barmaid weaves between the tables, while a windling troubadour croons softly in the corner, playing a large, harp-like instrument, vibrating the strings with the breeze created by her wings.

The quiet, while unusual, is very restful. So restful, in fact, the entrance of a dwarf, babbling hysterically and tearing at his hair, shocks you into motion.

Themes and Images

The mood at the outset should be calm, peaceful, and even a little boring. The arrival of the manic dwarf provides a sharp, jarring contrast to the atmosphere of serenity.

well. He then rushed into the nearest establishment, begging for help.

If the adventurers are confused as to why he cannot go after her by himself, have one of the customers explain that Lucien nearly died of drowning as a child, and this has left him with a terror of water deeper than his forefinger.

Lucien will be practically incoherent at first. It will take some gentle handling by the player characters to get the full story. Once they do, however, they must work fast. Dwarves are not known for their natural buoyancy, and a child so young might panic, hastening the inevitable. If concern is expressed that the child might already be dead, remind them that a last chance salve might be effective, if she is reached quickly and the damage is not too great. One of the locals will gladly provide one, if the adventurers do not have one available.

Once they decide to rescue Mirielle and have gathered any supplies they wish, move to **Into the Well**.

Troubleshooting

It is very unlikely, but the group may decide not to help Lucien. If it looks like this might be the case, play to their mercenary tendencies by reminding them that Lucien has many contacts in trade circles, and might be in a position to get them jobs later. While this is not terribly heroic, it will likely get the job done. If this is the case, though, the townspeople will note their reluctance to help without compensation, and act accordingly. These guys are supposed to be heroes, after all.

Shame will work here, as well. *"Some 'brave' adepts," the hunter snorts, gathering a rope and heading for the well.* This, or something similar, will likely get the adventurers moving.

Into The Well

Overview

In this portion of the adventure, the characters explore the well from above and inside, discovering the tunnel. They swim through, finding evidence of the girl's survival.

Setting the Stage

Once the group reaches the well and looks in, read the following aloud or paraphrase:

The well is wide enough to drop an obsidian through, and looks sturdy enough to take the subsequent beating. An assortment of weatherbeaten ropes and buckets hangs from a circular wooden framework over the opening. Looking down, the water is so clear you can see metallic glints from fallen hairpins and jewelry at the bottom. In between you and those pins is a mesh screen, roughly ten feet below the surface of the water, fifty feet down. Mirielle is nowhere to be seen.

Behind the Scenes

Mirielle did indeed fall in the well. She cannot be seen because she managed to grip the edge of a tunnel opening just under the level of the water, and climbed in. She then quickly struggled through the tunnel with a little help from a gentle current, strong enough to push her small body to the end of the water. Coughing up water, she emerged into the river-carved passages, and fumbling around in the dark, slid down the middle passage, right into the waiting fangs of a predatory

scintillant spider.

The opening to the cavern cannot be seen from above. The only way to find it is to have someone go down and look. Using the sturdy ropes and buckets, an elf-sized or smaller Namegiver may be lowered down for a closer look. Larger Namegivers will require more reliable support. Use the Climbing rules, p. 206, in the **ED Rulebook**.

Once a volunteer agrees to go down and take a closer look, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Your descent is swift. Within moments, you are almost at water level. You quickly yell up to the top of the well to stop, lest you get an unexpected dunking.

The walls are plastered with algae, some of it dried, indicating that at one point the water level was at least ten feet higher. The air is cold and dank. You note that the grate is quite sturdy-looking, with the mesh separated by mere inches; certainly not big enough for a child to fall through. Where could she have gone then?

Twisting in your makeshift harness, you catch a glimpse of shadow just under the water. Looking closer, it is apparent that the shadow is an opening in the wall of the well.

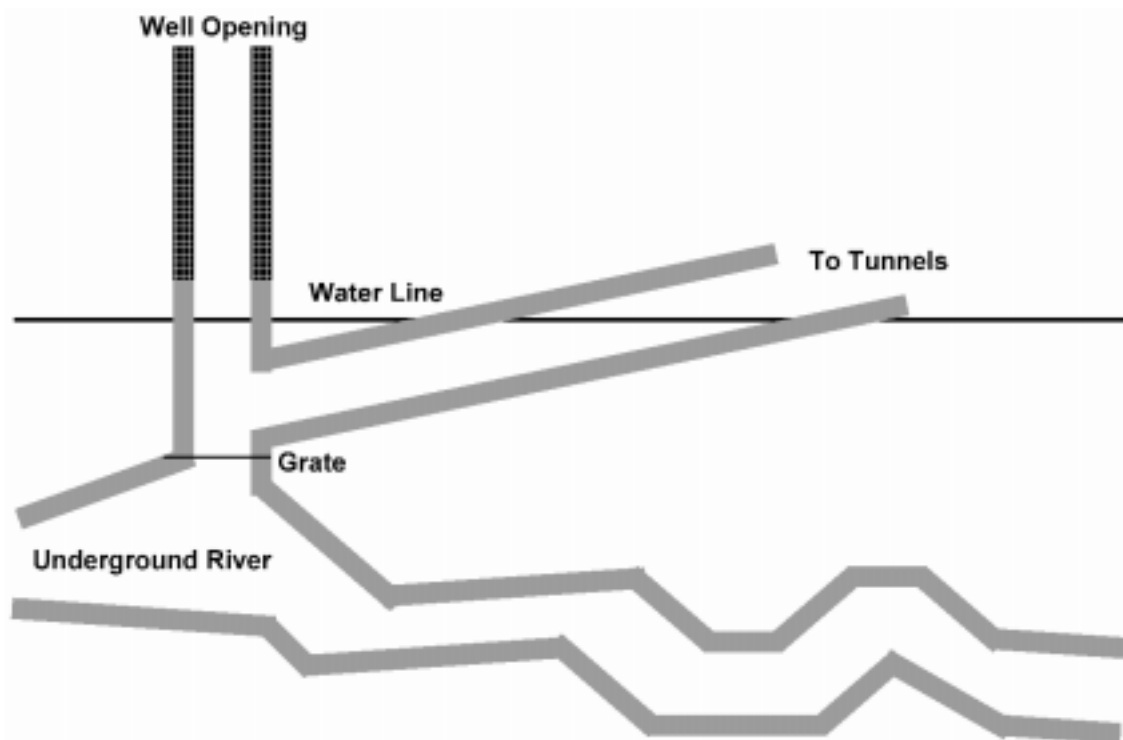
On a Perception (6) Test, the investigator may note that algae around the opening has been recently disturbed, giving some indication of where the girl has gone. With this information, the group may decide to go through the opening *en masse*. The hole itself is roughly one and a half meters wide, enough for an obsidian to go through with only minimal bother. At this point, the adventurers should be thinking about gathering gear. If the party doesn't think to take extra pitons, hammers, and rope, have a local suggest it or offer these items for the rescue attempt.

About the Well

From top rim to the water's surface, the well is fifty feet deep. The rim and walls are constructed of stone and mortar, but this material abruptly stops fifteen feet above the water, revealing a mix of dirt and bedrock from there down. The opening at the well's top is three meters in diameter, as befits a communal water source, and the walls are three feet tall from rim to ground. A framework of metal and wood supports five buckets with ropes, with room for more.

Usually, the water level is twenty feet higher, as evidenced by dried algae stains on the walls. It seems to go through seasonal changes--the twenty foot drop

was not unexpected. Once someone goes down more than sixty feet, the drilled well abruptly opens up into a larger, water filled cavern with strong currents--the underground river is still in operation. As a safety measure, the Namegivers who drilled this well built a



metal grate several feet above the natural cavern, so if anyone did fall in, it was unlikely they'd slip through to the dangerous cavern. It would have been placed higher, but seasonal changes drop the water level below the mesh, and the grid is too fine to pass a bucket through.

There have been discussions lately in town of introducing rudimentary plumbing, but nothing has been decided on yet.

The Tunnel, and Going Through

The entrance to the tunnel is one and a half meters wide, and sits roughly one foot under the waterline. It appears to be a natural formation--there are no tool marks inside the tunnel. Most Namegiver races will have little trouble traversing the tunnel, but an obsidianman may find it a tight, but not impossible, fit. Going through the tunnel will take about 1.5 minutes, or nine rounds. It will be difficult going--for the entire nine rounds, the swimmers will be totally submerged, even though the passage gradually widens and slopes upward. Refer to **Denizens of Barsaive, Vol. 1**, page

123, for more information on swimming. If you don't have it, here is a segment of the passage that will be most useful for this event--drowning.

Assume the characters can swim somewhat. However, their lungs will only hold out for a number

of rounds equal to their Toughness step. Thereafter, they will take damage equal to 4 + the number of rounds spent underwater since running out of breath. Absolutely no armor applies.

Once the nine rounds are up, they emerge into a dark, relatively dry tunnel. Some form of light source will be needed here. Low light vision will be useless, as there is absolutely no light to work with, and heat sight is useful

only in keeping track of nearby party members. Caves are notorious for their minimal temperature variations. If the gamemaster wishes, he may allow such characters a Difficult or greater Perception test to pick out their surroundings.

Once a light quartz is produced, or less desirable, a dry lit torch, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You marvel at the fact that the air, although warm and stuffy, is fairly breathable. Perhaps there is an opening onto the surface somewhere farther down. Getting your bearings, you note that the tunnel branches off in three directions directly ahead of you. The floor and ceiling of these tunnels are encrusted with glistening white stalagmites and stalactites, and your mind begins to conjure up uncomfortable comparisons with predatory teeth. Before the junction of tunnels, you see the stumbling, quickly vanishing footprints of a small child, and splotches where she had probably coughed up water. The ones closest to you are still too wet to dry so quickly, but from the ones farther up, it is impossible to tell which direction she took.

Move on to **...And Down Tunnel Number One...**

Troubleshooting

Water is the main problem here. While most Namegivers have only the usual difficulties with water, windlings and obsidimen have additional concerns.

While windlings are certainly physically capable of swimming, they find it distasteful at the very least, and terrifying at most. This is due to the fact that water makes their normally tough wings fragile, easily rent, and unusable. Those groups that contain windlings will need to determine ways to get them in, most of which will probably involve an air-filled sack sealed to watertightness, and a nine round period of imprisonment.

Obsidimen, on the other hand, are not physically capable of swimming. Any solution to getting them through the tunnel will probably involve rope, and lots of it. However, care must be taken, as once the rope is soaked, the water combined with the obsidiman's weight will cause it to stretch. Given enough time, the rope will weaken, possibly fraying and snapping at an inconvenient time.

Assume that an average rope has a Strength Step of 8, and a "Death" Rating of 50. Each doubling of the rope, or additional length of rope, increases this Strength step by +4. (For example, a fifty foot rope doubled over to twenty-five feet has a Strength step of 12. Doubled over again to twelve feet, it has a Strength step of 16.) A rope can be doubled over a maximum of four times, or to a minimum of ten feet--going beyond this will result in no further returns in the first case (as the rope is too thick and inflexible to be of any use), or too short to use effectively in the latter.

Each time the rope is used for a burden of 600 pounds or more (with an upper limit of 1500 pounds), make a Strength Test using the Strength step of the rope, adding bonuses for doubling if done. The target number is determined by the burden's Strength Step + Toughness Step. If the rope is dry, only an Average success is needed. If the rope has gotten wet, raise the level of success needed by one for each time the rope has been soaked and used. (For example, if a rope has been soaked once, used, dried, and soaked again, an Excellent success is needed for the rope to hold a 600+ pound burden. If it had been used after being dried once, but before being soaked a second time, only a Good success is needed.) This is cumulative for each soaking and drying of the rope.

If the Test succeeds, nothing happens, and the rope will hold. If the Test fails, make a Damage Test

using the combined Strength and Toughness Steps of the burden.

This damage is applied to the rope's Death Rating. If the rope's Death Rating is not exceeded, it will not snap, but each 12 points increases the success level needed for the rope to hold a heavy burden by one. This is cumulative with soaking and drying above, to a maximum of four times, or an Extraordinary success.

After 12 points of damage, a visible fray will develop, and will be easily detected if someone examines the rope. With each 12 points, the fray will become larger, until at 50, the rope snaps.

...And Down Tunnel Number One...

Overview

Exploration of the tunnels occurs here, with the search suddenly cut short by the sound of a child's scream. Following the sound, the adventurers are confronted by a steep descent, which they cannot see the bottom of. They must trust to ingenuity and luck to go down safely.

Setting the Stage

As the group begins to search, read the following aloud, or paraphrase:

Now that you can see what you are doing, it will be easier to find the girl. Three tunnels lie ahead of you, though. The girl evidently went down one of them, but which one? It looks like your first action will be to search the passages.

Behind the Scenes

Mirielle went down the second tunnel, the one in the center. It will take time to determine that, though, unless the group has a scout, beastmaster, or someone who has Tracking. The gamemaster should not feel he needs to rush the search. At the appropriate time, Mirielle will still be captured by the creature lairing in the depths of the cavern, before the characters can get to her.

The Cavern Branches

All three tunnels have a proliferation of stalactites hanging from the top of the tunnel, and fewer stalagmites rising from the floor. From ceiling to floor, the passages vary in height and width from eight

to ten feet, so even a troll will have little problem getting around. Refer to the map of the cavern for easier visualization of the following descriptions.

Tunnel One leads downward into an egg-shaped cavern, roughly thirty feet wide by forty feet long. The ceiling is covered with stalactites. In the center of the downward sloping floor is a depression filled with stagnant water, and a few live (and many more dead) blind cave fish. The depression is only two feet deep, but is quite slick with decaying fish. There is nothing else of interest.

Tunnel Two has fewer and fewer stalactites and stalagmites the farther the group goes down it, and at a certain point begins a steep, curving descent, so that the eventual end is impossible to see without actually going down it. More information will be provided in the following paragraphs entitled **Descent Into Tunnel Two**. This information will be important, as this is the direction Mirielle took.

Tunnel Three is similar in shape and description to Tunnel One, including the eventual cul-de-sac it becomes. There is a difference, though. The pool here is deeper than the one in the cavern at the end of Tunnel One; so deep, in fact, that it rejoins the underground river some feet below. A hint to this dangerous fact is that the fish that can be seen here are alive, and quite active. They are harmless, but if one of the adventurers steps in to investigate, they are unceremoniously dunked. This is not meant to be a fatal act, and any rescue attempt with half a bit of sense should be successful. It is simply a warning, to keep adventurers on their toes.

At some point during the search, have the characters make a Perception (6) Test. This can be done at any point, but should not happen more than five minutes after they emerge from the nine round swim. At first, they hear a scream. On a successful Test, they are able to determine, based on the direction of the sound, that Mirielle is somewhere down Tunnel Two. If the Test is failed, they may still be able to find her through process of elimination--Tunnels One and Three are dead ends.

Descent Into Tunnel Two

Before the downward spiral begins, the heretofore prevalent stalactites and stalagmites dwindle in numbers to nothing, and the walls and floor become smooth, even slick. Because the corkscrew path of the tunnel is so tightly coiled and long (seventy feet from top to bottom), it is impossible to determine what lies at its end without exploration.

The corkscrew ends in a funnel-shaped cavern, thirty by forty feet, with a pair of two meter wide openings in the bottom. There are stalactites and stalagmites around the cavern's edge, but not around these openings. The nearer opening, Hole One, empties into a tunnel that extends further away from the well, eventually opening up on the side of a hill. Mirielle did not go this way. The farther opening, Hole Two, leads to a similar tunnel, but curves around so it's difficult to see what's around the corner without exploration. Mirielle went this way.

Traversing the corkscrew can be dangerous without the proper equipment. If the group contains a relatively dry windling, and/or had foresight enough to bring lots of rope, there is little risk. In the first case, the windling may simply take a light source with him down the corkscrew, scout it out, then return with the information about the bottom. The group may then aid their descent with ropes attached to stalagmites in Tunnel Two. Alternatively, without a windling's help, they may just rig some ropes for a slow, careful descent. Getting around the cavern might be tricky, but a Climbing (4) test should allow the characters to grab for handholds in the surrounding rock formations. Once this is accomplished, the group should have little trouble examining the holes.

If, however, the group brought nothing to assist in spelunking (unlikely, with the help of the locals, but still possible), they may slide down the corkscrew, but this will result in a bumpy, uncontrollable, and ultimately painful ride. Have such characters make Climbing (12) tests. If they are fortunate enough to make it, their wild ride brought them close enough to grab a stalagmite, which they do. If they fail, flip a coin--heads, they go down Hole One; tails, down Hole Two. Either way, they take falling damage for forty-five feet; half the length of the corkscrew, plus ten feet to the bottom of each hole.

In Hole One

There is little of significance down this way. Once at the bottom of the hole, a ten minute upsloped walk leading away from the well will bring them outside, on a hill.

In Hole Two

This one abruptly drops ten feet onto a level floor. It is here that the main encounter will occur. More about this passage will be found in the next section, **Trapped!**



frustrated: no one enjoys losing a character on their first adventure. If it looks like one of the characters may die, fudge the roll so that they only go unconscious. They should pay a price for lack of preparedness, but not a fatal one. It will encourage them to learn from their mistakes.

If the group wishes to have someone return topside and obtain ropes and pitons, allow them to do so, but emphasize that it must be done quickly. Alternatively, if you feel an equalizer will likely be needed, have one of Siridfaath's valiant townsfolk follow down with ropes and such. Similarly, someone local can volunteer extra gear before the initial descent, if the gamemaster feels the group doesn't need a lot of help.

The group may become separated, with some going down the first hole, and others down the second. If the group came with plenty of rope this shouldn't happen, but if ill-prepared, this may be difficult to remedy. Assume that any well thought-out and plausible method will succeed. The group will need to be together for the encounter with the scintillant spider that lairs at the end of Hole Two.

Trapped!

Overview

After the descent into Hole Two, the group spies what they believe to be sunlight. When they investigate, they are attacked by a strange creature--a scintillant spider. Once the beast is defeated, they find Mirielle, and an old corpse. They bring Mirielle out, to the great relief of Lucien, and the cheers of Siridfaath's townsfolk.

Setting the Stage

It was quite an ordeal reaching this point, but you

Troubleshooting

Depending on how well prepared the group is for exploring caves, there could be some problems here. If ill-prepared, it is conceivable that some of the characters could be seriously injured here, or even killed. This scenario not meant to be deadly--rather, it is supposed to serve as an introduction to the game system and the Earthdawn world for beginning players. As such, if the gamemaster ends up killing or maiming characters, the players may become

think you're on the right track. In fact, you can see footprints on the carpet by the sunlight streaming from around the corner, just up ahead.

Then the strangeness of the scene strikes you...you're far too deep underground to see sunlight, and since when do caves have carpets? Then sudden movement catches your eye, and a hideous beast leaps out at you!

Themes and Images

The relief the characters feel about being on the right track should be tempered with confusion about the sunlight and rug. Once the beast attacks, there should be a frantic sense of urgency--if Mirielle still lives, this creature is standing between her and the group.

Behind the Scenes

The group is standing at the entrance to the lair of a scintillant spider, described below. It has lived here since the waters receded several years ago (it takes a very long time for the water to get this far, what with the upslope of the upper passages). Detecting the group's movement through vibrations in the strands of it's cobweb, the spider is just around the corner, with its sunlight lure on and has already prepared to strike. Have the characters make surprise rolls, then combat will commence as usual. If running this adventure for higher Circle characters, widen the passage and add more spiders as desired.

Scintillant Spider

DEX: 10	STR: 12	TOU: 10
PER: 13	WIL: 7	CHA: 4
Initiative: 10	Physical Defense: 13	
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 15	
Attack: 12	Social Defense: 6	
Damage: Bite 17	Armor: 10	
Claw 15		
Number of Spells: 2	Mystic Armor: 3	
Spellcasting: 15	Knockdown:	
Effect: Poison	Recovery Tests: 5	
or Light (see below)		
Death Rating: 55	Combat Movement: 85	
Wound Threshold: 15	Full Movement: 170	
Unconsciousness Rating: 47		

Legend Points: 840

Equipment: None

Loot: Poison sac worth 1d10 x 200 silver, which counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

Note: This creature has an aversion, and a vulnerability to, fire. See **Commentary** and **Rules** below for more information.

Commentary

Sometimes known as "flicks" or "glares", these six-foot long beasts are almost exclusively found in caves, living in coves of between one and six spiders. Normally elusive, scintillant spiders only fight when cornered. Unfortunately, due to their natural habitat, they are nearly always found cornered.

Their name comes from a peculiar talent they have, used for luring prey. Their transparent bodies can produce a brilliant light, similar to sunlight. First, they detect the prey, then wait just out of view, and turn on their light. This deludes the prey into thinking that the end of the tunnel opens out onto the outside. Once within range, the spider will leap on the victim, biting it and simultaneously injecting a paralyzing poison. Once the victim is sedated, the spider wraps its meal up in silk, and carries it back to its lair. Even trolls may fall victim and be carried off.

Their appearance is startling--a six-foot long spider, transparent, with six legs attached to the underside of the thorax, and a pair of vestigial legs near the base of the abdomen, used to extrude silk from the spinnerets located between them. All of the internal organs are visible, including the poison sac, which is found in the area before the head-thorax junction, just under the brain. It is easily recognizable, as it is a pale blue in color. Curiously enough, the venom of a scintillant spider is often reduced into components by alchemists and used in the production of various types of potions and salves, including one variety of healing potion produced in Travar. Also, this poison is sometimes diluted by slavers, to make their merchandise more tractable and easily transported.

Nearly blind, they hunt their prey with a combination of touch and astral sight. The areas surrounding their lairs are normally covered with strands of silk. When one of the strands trembles, the spider knows dinner is nearby. Once alerted, the spider stealthily locates the prey through astral sight, then cannily waits just out of sight down dinner's path, and turns on its light. Often, several spiders with cooperate in a hunt, cutting off any side passages the meal might try to escape down.

These creatures have an aversion to fire, and will retreat rather than face it.

Scintillant Poison

Type of Poison: Paralyzing, with an analgesic effect.

Step Number: 15

Spell Defense: 15

Onset Time: 1d3 rounds

Duration: Effect test in hours.

Method of Exposure: Introduction into bloodstream.

Can be diagnosed by: Blue lips, clammy feel to the skin, paralysis, insensibility to pain.

The light produced by scintillant spiders can be pulsed, creating a strobing effect to confuse would-be attackers or prey, and allow the spider to escape or catch dinner. To use this effect, the spider makes a Spellcasting test vs. the targets' Spell Defense plus 3. If successful, the targets subtract 2 steps to all tests involving the use of sight. The effect can be sustained for 10 rounds without any effort on the part of the spider. Once the tenth round has passed, the spider must make another Spellcasting test to continue the pulsing light. Astral sight is not affected.

Fire is a particularly potent weapon against the scintillant spider. If using fire as a weapon, double the Damage Step or damage of the source—for example, the First Circle elemental spell Flameweapon does 2d4 rather than the normal d4, and a torch will do 8 steps of damage, as opposed to the normal 4. Sample damage for other sources of fire can be found on p. 207 of the **ED Rulebook**.

At first, the spider is aiming only to subdue the characters, for later meals. If, however, the spider takes a wound, is faced with fire, or takes damage totaling 30 or more, it will retreat into the safety of its lair to heal. Since the tunnel dead-ends into its lair, it will only retreat once from the passage. If the characters pursue, it will be a fight to the death. Once the spider is killed, its lair may be searched. In it, the adepts find two cocoons. The smaller of the two contains Mirielle, blue-lipped but still breathing, though unconscious.

The second cocoon contains a withered corpse. Here, the gamemaster may customize the adventure to suit his campaign. More information on this can be found in **Loose Ends**.

Getting Out

Once the girl is found, the group will want to exit the cave complex. There are two ways this can be

done.

First, they may discover, upon exploring Hole One, that it leads outside, though away from the village. They may exit this way.

Secondly, they may see that the spider silk lining this lair is very strong, light, resists water, and is easily woven. With it, they may quickly construct ropes and air masks that, while they will not hold up to extended use, will allow them to get out the way they came in more easily. A Perception (7) Test will suggest these uses if an adventurer mentions he is looking around. Either way, they will soon be found by the people of Siridfaath, and hailed as heroes.

Troubleshooting

The battle with the spider may go badly here. Keep in mind, though, that the spider's aim is not to kill—at least, not right away. There is no sense in wasting good prey. If they are all captured, put off the spider's feeding in favor of rest, and allow one or more characters to attempt escape after the effects of the poison wear off. Perhaps they will be able to bring help.

If you introduced an equalizer character earlier in the adventure, they could also participate in the combat, evening the odds a bit more. In any case, try not to have the equalizer show the characters up. Avoid killing any of the characters if this is a beginning adventure. Although the Earthdawn world is dangerous, no one likes to have a character they spent lots of time on die in their first outing.

Loose Ends

After the Adventure

This is a simple adventure, designed to be completed in one evening as an introduction to the Earthdawn world and system, or as the beginning of a new campaign, and make the characters instant heroes in a small, closely-knit community where they might otherwise be unknown. It will also give the characters their first taste of the rewards, and responsibilities, of fame.

As such, many things could happen after the group emerges from the well. Depending on how valiantly they acted, they could pay reduced amounts for food at local taverns, receive gifts from some of the merchants, or anything the gamemaster feels is suitable. One suggestion is to tell them that Ngado Fairhand, the town alchemist, wants to meet them.

Once there, she will explain that Mirielle is her 'heart-daughter', and reward them with a few potions. Be careful not to go overboard on such rewards, though. Despite their heroic actions, they are still only First Circle adepts, and Siridfaath is a small town.

The body found in the spider's lair may provide seed for a future adventure. It may be the corpse of a famous adventurer, a Theran spy, or just a poor beggar. Whatever the gamemaster decides, furnish the lair with items or treasure accordingly. For example, a Theran spy may have a coded journal of his activities, lots of money, and perhaps even a magical item or two, while a beggar would only have a few coppers, if that, and perhaps a letter to a long lost family. Once the gamemaster has determined who and what the body once was, he could have the makings of an interesting adventure on his hands.

Awarding Legend Points

The adventure Legend Award for **The Well** is 200 points. Specific awards are described below.

Creative Roleplaying and Heroics

Award Legend Points for creative roleplaying and heroics if characters take any of the actions described below. Unless otherwise noted, only the first character to accomplish one of these goals earns the Legend Points listed.

Agreeing to rescue Mirielle without promise of reward (1 or more)	25
Descending the well to scout out the area	10
Plans that successfully ensure the safety or rescue of any party member or NPC (may be given freely at GM discretion)	25

Defeating Creatures

Award Legend Points for defeating creatures and opponents in this adventure as shown on the Creature/Opponent Award Table.

Creature & Opponent Award Table

Creature/Opponent	6 Players	7 Players	8 Players
Scintillant Spider	840	840	840
Total	840	840	840
Award Per Character	140	120	105

Treasure

This award can be variable, depending upon the

identity of the second body. However, a treasure certain to be in the adventure is the spider's poison sac, worth 1d10 x 200 silver, which counts as treasure worth Legend Points. Divide this equally between the players. It is up to the gamemaster to determine the Legend Point value of any additional treasure.

Total Legend Award

Based on the figures listed above, a single character who completes **The Well** receives an average of 500 points. This average assumes seven players in a group, and does not include points earned for battling opponents or finding treasure placed by the gamemaster.

Cast of Characters

Only two NPCs are described here--they are the only ones mentioned by Name and have a direct bearing on the adventure. If the gamemaster wishes to introduce more NPCs from Siridfaath, please refer to that character's information in the article on Siridfaath.

Lucien Orond

Proprietor of a local messenger service, Lucien is normally a jolly sort of fellow, and typical of many dwarfs in his beliefs of hospitality and the value of children. The potential loss of his daughter to something he is in mortal terror of sends him into emotional apoplexy. He wishes he could go in after her, but cannot make himself do so.

Attributes

DEX: 5	STR: 6	TOU: 6
PER: 5	WIL: 5	CHA: 4

Mirielle Orond

Though either absent or unconscious for most of the adventure, Mirielle is nonetheless a most animated youngster, talkative and inquisitory, and somewhat too daring for her own good. Her curiosity often gets her into places where she shouldn't go. Perhaps she will be an adept when she gets older?

Attributes

DEX: 5	STR: 4	TOU: 5
PER: 4	WIL: 5	CHA: 4

The Executioner's Ax

by Joshua Bardwell

In my dream, I step from the flames of the building where the members of Thera's Hook lie dead or dying. Black spots dance in front of my eyes, and my head pounds from that human bitch's spell. I follow Brak's wide, hunched shape out onto the street. Sal follows, carrying the unconscious Iago over his shoulder. A thin human with a hooked nose spots us. His eyes get big and he takes off at a run. Through a black haze I cast, and he topples, his boots stuck to the ground. Sal catches up. There are now two unconscious forms over his shoulder.

"A common thief," Brak says. His voice is hard, like edged steel. "Better to kill him." The orkish runes on my dagger gleam and dance in the firelight. Hook-nose screams as I cut his throat and his blood spills over my fist. The haze smothers me, and I fall.

A horde of blood monkeys, each the size of a burly ork, surround me, hooting and calling and baring their teeth. They dance in, claws snatching, but deflected by my winds each time. Gwyneth and Morgan take off running into the lair in panic. A dark furry mass breaks in their direction, and, at the last second, I shift my target. Magic bursts through me like a flood through a dam, ripping the jungle with icy winds and snow. The monkeys turn to paper, shredding and blowing away, and then, in slow motion, I see Gwyneth and Morgan falling, their eyes accusing me. Their bodies hit the ground and shatter like glass, and I fall.

A dark figurine of a prone elf spins in blackness. Thorns dot her body and blood runs from her eyes. She freezes and shatters. I breathe, and Ubyr's blood fills my lungs, black and thick. Wind whips past my head. A flurry of black robes smothers me with Vestrial's laughter. Rothaine's head, face peeled back to reveal a bloody skull, commands: "You must kill me. I cannot control this." He fades. An old elf with a long white beard holds a balance. On one tray, a rose.

On the other, a knife. The scale tips, the knife falls, and the rose melts. His eyes are sad as he crumbles to dust. A fireball blooms, tossing lupine bodies like dolls. Their teeth snarl and snap at me as they fly by. Iago grins and pierces his finger with a dagger, point up. Blood runs down its blade and outlines the runes etched therein, but they spell my name.

I am the knife.

I am the spilt blood.

The bodies and cries of the dead bury me, and always mine is the last among them. My own dead eyes stare back at me.

From the personal diaries of
Elia Saral'drellen,
Charassa 27, 1509

The trade route to Jerris was dry; it had grown increasingly arid for the last four days. Lush forest had surrendered to gaunt trees and bushes, which had now given way to sparse scrub brush and the occasional bare-branched skeleton. Elia Saral'drellen put his waterskin to his lips and wet his mouth with a small swallow of warm liquid. Although the sun had grown fainter daily, obscured by the gray ash of the ever-approaching Wastes, the temperature had risen steadily. Such inconsistencies were not uncommon in the West. His shoulder-length brown hair snagged his fingers as he combed at it distractedly. They had been on the road too long.

His companions seemed less concerned with nature's inconsistencies. Sal rode in front and to one side, his light green skin and garish, bright clothing standing out against the drab gray backdrop of the terrain. Although he possessed a sharp wit, Sal was more concerned with his sword and his clothes than the weather. Iago, Elia's other companion, hid his thoughts behind the cold veil of his eyes. Elia preferred not to tread those waters. He knew that the human had spent some time in Vivane, fighting with the resistance against the Therans, but nothing more. Although Iago had proven himself to the group several

times, he remained a cipher.

"How much farther to Jerris?" Elia asked, hoping to spark a conversation.

"Three days," Sal replied cheerily. "Two if Floranuus smiles on us and our horses are swift." Iago remained stony. Silence fell again, interrupted only by the sound of horses' hooves. Elia retreated into his thoughts.

The Wastes were dead, yet he kept returning. Next to Throal and Bartertown, home until the political climate made things uncomfortable, Jerris was the only place that he had visited more than once since leaving Thrindallwen. The first visit had been nearly a year ago, when the Behemoth had made its appearance in the skies over Barsaive. In the ensuing confusion, they had been sucked into the Liferock Rebellion, incurring the wrath of Thera in the process. It seemed that the reward for sticking out one's neck was to have it severed.

Life was a lot more complex outside Jarik Wood.

Back there, the occasional rumor of spies from Alachia's court was the peak of excitement. Now, he had met, and even traveled with, one of the feared Blood Elves. She was a little brusque, but hardly malicious. In the outside world, enemies were less well defined. There were rarely any clear answers here, and the obvious ones were usually at a sword's point.

The horses strode on, untroubled by life's complexity.

As the sun fell in the western sky, Sal interrupted Elia's reflection with a wave of his hand. "Ssst! Hey! Wake up! We're being watched." The t'skrang continued to ride casually and turned his head only slightly to talk, but his pale green crest flared agitatedly and his tail whipped back and forth. Elia scanned the road, finding nothing in the few clumps of foliage that might have provided cover for spying eyes. Iago nodded to Sal.

"At least four of them. They've been following us for the last five minutes."

Elia still saw no one. There was a noise from behind, and he turned in his saddle to see two forms blocking the road, lit by the setting sun. He marked one by his stature as a troll, and the other as either a tall human or an elf. They were dressed in bland colors that blended in with the landscape.

"Two behind us," he warned.

"I know." Sal fingered the ruby hilt of his sword, Kendry's Blade, from the human kingdom of Landis. It had slain a dragon, and now belonged to him.

"Keep your eyes open and wait for it," Iago growled.

They did not have to wait long. The two behind kept their distance, staying far back enough to remain nonthreatening and showing no sign of hostility. Shortly, a small human stepped onto the road, blocking their passage. To his left stood a taller human with a ring in his ear and a scar across one cheek. To his right



loomed a second troll with both horns missing. They gripped the stocks of two heavy wooden crossbows, pointed at Sal and Elia respectively. Sal reined in his horse.

“Greetings, travelers,” he called. “From where do you hail and to where are you going?”

The short human smirked, showing two rows of small, neat teeth. Their even ranks contrasted the craggy landscape of his face. “I hail from here, frog, and I go where I please. Right this now I’m not getting there as fast as I’d like, but your horses would sure ease that on.” His accent was odd, clipped and twisted as if his mouth hurt. His companions had caught up and blocked escape from behind. Elia cursed silently and prepared his defensive spells. Iago’s frown deepened slightly as he brushed the dagger concealed on his upper thigh. He bore the expression of one who will soon swallow something extremely bitter. “I hate this part,” he whispered.

Sal laughed, and his tail swished rhythmically now. “Frog? Perhaps to one of your stature, I appear to be a frog, but I assure you that when you grow a little you’ll see I’m not.” As he finished the gibe, he leapt from his saddle, sword in hand. Elia cursed again as the world became a blur.

A rush of swirling winds leapt up around him. He swung out of his saddle, shifting his staff to his right hand and drawing a handful of small, smooth stones from the pouch at his belt. A bolt whizzed through the air where his head had been. A growl came behind him. Two arms crossed his chest like bands of steel, crushing the breath from him. He drove the butt of his staff down hard into his assailant’s foot and simultaneously lurched forward, breaking the grip, spinning away. Two thrown stones blossomed into a pair of spike covered mace heads. He knew that they would find their mark even before he saw them hit, blinding the troll with his own blood. The horses had bolted. Sal was fencing the small human and his taller friend simultaneously and seemed to have them both well in hand. He hurled insults with each thrust and cut. The second troll was engaged with a previously unnoticed human, about Iago’s size and build, dressed similarly to the other bandits. The human fainted with a dagger, barely scratching his opponent, and the troll staggered and fell. “No honor among thieves, indeed,” Elia thought. That left one human, or maybe an elf, but where?

A smashing blow across the back of his head answered his question. Elia fell, seeing stars. A great weight landed on his back. He was struck again, the blow falling across his shoulders, barely deflected by

his spell. He shoved upwards with all his might, but the weight refused to give. The world went gray and cottony with the third blow. Then, suddenly, the weight was gone and the blows stopped.

He was momentarily deafened by the silence. The short human who had been fighting the troll stood over him, offering his hand. Elia stared in disbelief as the human’s features melted and then solidified into Iago’s familiar countenance. He grimaced and sheathed a dagger. “You all right?”

Elia allowed himself to be helped to his feet, not hearing his companion’s queries. Sal had neatly routed his two. They were visible, running towards the horizon, their abandoned weapons lying forgotten. The first troll lay prone, only scratched, but barely breathing. The second was hardly recognizable, his head crushed like an overripe pumpkin. The elf was struggling to his feet, a small dart lodged in his chest. More of Iago’s concoctions, surely. Elia kicked him to the ground, drawing a long thin stiletto. He was no warrior, but he was proficient enough.

“You bastards,” he muttered. The elf scuffled away, Iago’s poison slowly paralyzing him. His eyes went wide as Elia advanced. In a flash, he was stuck to the ground. Elia planted his knee in the elf’s chest. “You picked the wrong marks today, eh?” He paused, and then plunged his stiletto into the elf’s throat, a drop of blood welling up dark and red, and then spilling onto the barren ground.

Nearly every morning since he had come of age and picked up a sword, Throbasalini S’ratha V’strimon, Sal for short, and Throb if you wanted to pick a fight, had worked the forms at dawn. It cleared his head, gave him time to think. He had missed a few days here and there, of course. The Therans, for example, had been more interested in his abilities with a pickax than with a sword, and so he had spent one of his precious four hours of nightly rest with eyes closed, working them in his head. This morning, he was preoccupied with the elf.

He fainted forward, changed direction just before full extension, and stepped sideways, cutting high, his height and long arms giving him the advantage. Though Elia was undoubtedly thrice Sal’s age in years, he acted like a youth in the midst of *kiassa*, charging stubbornly ahead without any regard for common sense. He struck out at any threat without considering the consequences. When he was endangered, it seemed, killing was the second option. The first was the enemy’s complete, instant, and

unconditional surrender.

Sal shuffled backwards, avoiding an imaginary blow, and then in one motion cut the wrist and face of his assailant. The reed bracelet on his own wrist distracted him for a moment; he was still unused to it. The elf had no sense of timing or balance. To him, the best way to disarm a trap was to put his foot into it and hope that his Passions-cursed magic would keep it attached. Some time as a *khamorro* would do him good, if there was a ship out there that would take him. Sal stepped lightly forward, turning a thrust to the midsection with the lower third of his blade and responding with one of his own. His attacker fell, pierced through. He knelt. The ritual was finished. He sheathed his blade and strolled over to the bedrolls. No doubt, Elia's intentions were good ones. Eventually life would teach him, as it did everyone.

"*P'skarrot*," he whispered over the sleeping elf, folding his arms thoughtfully and exhaling a deep sigh. "It seems we swim together this time." Elia moaned in his sleep and rolled over, dreaming unhappily.

Three days after the attempted robbery, they approached Jerris. The ground was flat and the city had been visible on the horizon for most of the day. It grew like a cancer as they approached, its high, dark, stone walls commanding their attention. Prickling with rows of wicked spikes at the top and rooted deep in the sandy soil, the walls encircled the city like the arms of some great giantess. Sentries watched from towers at each of the four corners, and two looked over the gates set into three of the four walls. The Western wall, facing the Wastes, was gateless. The travelers approached from the south, where they were met by three burly guards. Patches on their shirts and armor marked them as members of the Import/Export Guild.

"State your name and your business," commanded the first, gruffly, blocking their path with his pike. His voice was muffled by a gray cloth, worn across the lower half of his face so that his mouth and nose were concealed. The second guard, similarly masked, produced a parchment and stick of charcoal to record their answers. Sal rode forward.

"I am Throbasalini S'ratha V'strimon." He bowed extravagantly at this point, no small feat on horseback, and then continued. "These are my companions, Elia Saral'drellen, and Iago Malar." Elia waved and smiled overbroadly. He had little respect for guards; they mostly got in the way. Iago's lips formed a nervous

impression of a smile as he ran his hands through his choppy, short-cropped, black hair, as if to neaten it. It sprung back defiantly. Memories of his days in the Resistance always came back to him at times like this, even if he had nothing to hide. "We come from the south and seek shelter and supplies," Sal finished. The second guard scribbled on his parchment while the first examined their horses and possessions with calculated silence. Finally, he seemed satisfied.

"All right. You may enter. There is a five silver entry tax, but you can come and go as you please for one week. If you stay longer than that, go to the Chancellor's office and reapply." He gave them each a dated receipt for their silver and waved them in.

"Good trade, gentlemen!" Sal called as they passed.

The main thoroughfare accommodated them easily. It was wide, with buildings of varying size on either side. The three dodged merchants, calling their wares halfheartedly, and people of all races shuffled by. A light ash drifted down from the sky like snow, coating them quickly. They were glad for their cloaks and drew them close. The guards' masks suddenly made sense. The downfall had been barely noticeable outside the city, but inside it seemed thicker and more oppressive.

"Since when," Elia pondered aloud, "do guards belong to the Importer's Guild?"

"Originally, they weren't," Iago replied absently. "Before the Scourge, the Importer's Guild in this area was in charge of tracking trade through each city and making sure that it was taxed appropriately. Afterwards, it was just as important to track who was coming and going as it was to track what, and so they joined with the cities' guards." Elia, surprised by Iago's unusual verbosity, simply stared. No further explanation was forthcoming. With a shrug, he returned his attention to the road and rode on.

Between Sal and Iago, they found their way to a moderately priced merchants' inn, the most common type in Jerris. "The Golden Scale," was tended by a thin human, a salty-haired man with the requisite apron. He was the first thin innkeeper Elia had ever seen. He rented them a large room with two beds and a cot, and upon entering it, Sal rejoiced at the sight of a modest bath in a separate room. He began to heat buckets of water to fill it.

"You know," Elia interrupted, "I could do that much faster." He closed his eyes and concentrated briefly, and then began to tap the sides of the tub rhythmically. In minutes, the water was steaming and Sal was relaxing contentedly.

"The question now," said Iago, lacing his fingers behind his head and reclining on a bed, "is what to do when our t'skrang friend has finished his bath." There was no answer from Sal except a happy hum and slight splashing. Elia answered.

"Remember Brak?" he called into the bath. "I seem to recall we left him on good terms, no? Perhaps we should track him down while we're in town. Maybe he's heard some news."

"Who's Brak?" Iago asked.

Sal answered from the tub. "A troll. We met him at the Battered Windling across town during the whole BlackHeart thing. He helped us hunt up one of the scorcher's lieutenants and find out about the back door to her fortress. We paid him handsomely for the information, but it was worth it."

"Yeah," Elia continued, "and the Arm of Throal paid us handsomely as well. The rumors about her Drakkar were true."

"Sounds like my kind of troll," Iago replied.

Freshly bathed, they stepped out onto the street and into the night, making their way across town. Neither stars nor moon were visible, and the ash continued to fall. Light and noise spilled from the front of the Battered Windling on the other side of town. A caricature of a bruised windling with broken wings had been drawn on the sign. It was a troll bar.

Inside, Brak, a rotund troll with a thick beard and a stern gaze, nearly choked on his beer as they entered.

"Greetings, Brak!" Elia called, dropping into a troll-sized seat. Sal and Iago followed suit, Iago, as usual, remaining quiet.

"Hello, elf! You're brave, showing up here," Brak acknowledged, regaining his composure.

Elia's innocence was entirely unfeigned. "Hmm? I've never had trouble from trolls." Sal leaned forward, shushing him with an impatient gesture.

"Ha!" Brak roared and thumped his mug on the table. "You're funny, but you're dumb. I mean Thera."

"What news from the South?" Sal asked.

"Only that there's ten thousand silvers on the head of any one of the Circle of Defenders, twenty if they're dead. You have some powerful enemies."

There were a few moments of silence. Iago crossed his arms and whistled, eyebrows raised.

"My thanks for the information," Sal finally said. "Is there anything else we should know?"

Brak answered in hushed tones, leaning forward secretively. "Have you heard of Thera's Hook? No? They're a group of Theran bounty hunters. There are



rumors that they're in town on the way up from Vivane. You should watch out for them."

Elia whistled and leaned back in his chair. "I guess we should say thanks," he replied. "You could have turned us in and collected the gold for yourself."

"I keep my loyalties, elf," was Brak's only reply. His chair scraped the floorboards as he rose to leave.

In spite of Brak's warnings, Sal insisted on staying for the tournament the following week. It was necessary, he said, for him to advance to the fifth circle. He had not competed in nearly six months, he insisted, over Elia's protests. Elia and Iago reluctantly conceded. On the sixth day, Brak was waiting for them in the Golden Scale. He folded and unfolded his hands and looked around like a bodyguard scanning a crowd for threats, or a spy looking for eavesdroppers.

"I have some work for you if you want it," he began. Sal took over. Negotiations were his business since Gwyneth had left. The purple-haired elf had had a natural vivaciousness that made people want to give her whatever she wanted, but she had returned to Thrindallwen after Cara Fahd. Dying had taken the taste of adventure out of her mouth.

"What is it?" Sal asked.

"A merchant's wife, an ork, is having some trouble sleeping. Talks about dreams. She thinks it's a horror. I think it's probably a Kreescra. Her husband's usually out of town, so he's no help. I'll offer a three hundred silver cut from what she's paying me if you can help her."

"How long has this been going on?" Sal probed, suspicious.

"About two weeks."

"Her name?" It was given. Sal continued to investigate, watching the troll's face carefully and gauging his responses. Something was definitely wrong, but the answers checked out, and there was no hesitation. Elia grew bored.

"Brak," he interrupted. "No offense you know, just being careful, but... are you setting us up?" Brak paused and faced him. His voice was flat and emotionless.

"If I were going to turn you in, would I have told you about the bounty? Or the Elite?"

Elia lowered his eyes and scratched his head, embarrassed. "Sorry. Just a little paranoid, I guess."

"Brak, can we have a minute?" Sal led them upstairs to their room and shut the door.

"Elia, that was stupid. I was doing just fine."

"You were taking forever!"

"Look, there are ways of doing these things, and that's not it."

Elia riposted with a venomous glare.

Sal threw up his hands and shook his head. "What do you think, Iago?"

"I think there's something he's not telling us. We should ask for nine hundred. See how high he's willing to go."

"Good. And this time," Sal pointed to Elia, "let me talk." Elia bowed mockingly to the t'skrang's back, spreading his arms wide.

They went downstairs. Sal asked for one thousand, bringing a shocked look to Elia's face (he did manage to stay quiet though). Brak agreed, nearly bringing a shocked look to Sal's face. He gave them an address and a time and then left.

A little scouting revealed nothing. The house was a small two story on a corner in the upscale side of town. The name and story checked out. An hour before the agreed-upon meeting time, everything seemed normal. Iago volunteered to scout ahead in disguise, saying to watch for him as blind beggar in the alley. A few minutes later, a blind beggar left the room. Sal and Elia waited.

It took awhile for Iago to get used to sensing the world astrally. He wore Elia's blindfold over his eyes, its magic giving him an odd sense of his surroundings that was simultaneously something more and less than sight. He could "see" things that were directly behind him, but only in muddy detail. It was, he imagined, what a dwarf's heat sight might look like, with astrally "cooler" objects appearing in muted blues and "hotter" ones burning red and orange. At times he simply closed his eyes and walked blind.

When he reached the house, he planted himself in a trash-filled alley behind it and waited. He noticed that there was no back door and filed the fact away in case it became useful later. The roof was high above, but it'd be possible to cross over to adjacent roofs easily. The front door probably wouldn't be a good ambush site. It opened onto the street and was in plain view.

His thoughts continued along these lines for about thirty minutes. In that time, he saw a stray dog, two old women who shuffled by hurriedly, unnoticing, and a drunken ork, but nothing resembling a group of Theran bounty hunters. There was also no movement inside the house. He considered calling off the whole thing upon noticing that, but decided not to, against his better judgment. She could be in bed, after all.

The air began to shimmer like the horizon on a hot day. He poked up a corner of the blindfold. It was dark, but no shimmering. The blindfold fell into place again. Now the shimmering was worse. There was a sudden sharp pain behind him.

He twisted around, clutching at the small of his back, where a small needle protruded from his skin, through his clothes. A figure, burning white, (how had he missed that?) scaled the house wall like a spider and pulled itself onto the roof. Iago tossed a dagger, but the strength was draining from him. He cursed as he fell, and then the world went black.

Elia and Sal stepped into the merchant wife's home. No one had answered their knocks. The curtains were pulled over the windows and the room was dark. It appeared pale blue in the sparse moonlight that filtered through the window. There was little furniture, a few chairs and a gaudy couch.

"Sal?" It came out as a whisper.

"Yes?" The response was a whisper as well.

"Something's wrong."

"I know." Sal drew his sword quietly. Elia began to weave threads.

The bottom story was empty. As they climbed the

stairs to the second, there was a creak, and the barest shuffling from downstairs.

"Did you hear that?" Whispered again.

"Yes."

"This is bad."

"I know."

A glance downstairs revealed nothing. Elia's buckler was covered with crackling blue sparks. A moment later, gently swirling winds surrounded him. He was ready for anything. Sal groaned.

The stairs ended in a "T" at the top. They separated, Elia stepping to the left, Sal to the right.

Elia found himself in the doorway of a shadowy bedroom. A figure sat in the bed, wrapped in blankets, its face masked in deep shadows. The merchant's wife. He entered, his hands at his sides, trying to conceal the ridiculously sparking shield.

"Greetings, lady. I am Elia Saral'drellen. Brak sent me."

"I am Sefira, of Thera's Hook." It stood and threw off the blankets, revealing a fit-looking human woman in white robes. "And I place you under arrest by the authority of the Theran army."

Elia stopped dead. His heart pounded in his ears. A thousand stories of Theran slavers mingled in his head with memories of the caverns underneath the Behemoth. Chains clinked in his ears. His first act was not an unreasonable one.

"Therans!" he yelled over his shoulder, still not moving.

"Your friend is already dead." The clash of swordplay from the hall suggested otherwise. "You have one chance to live."

Elia didn't wait to hear. He had already cast. Two stones bounced off her chest. She shrugged indifferently and circled him, doing something that made her shimmer. A beam of light arced across the air, sputtering and dying before it reached him. Raggok's horns, she looked smug. That couldn't be good. He shoved a chair at her and attempted to dispel whatever was making her shimmer, but failed again. Panic was no good. She advanced, again pointing at him, and again, the beam of light sputtered and died. Whatever she was doing didn't seem to be working either. Swords clanged behind him, blocking his retreat. He knew better than to get in the middle of a sword fight, defensive spells or no. Then something wrapped itself around his head and squeezed, hard. His last thought as he lost consciousness was: "Well, that was pointless, wasn't it?"

Sal, meanwhile, had already learned of the Theran presence. He had turned right at the top of the stairs and nearly entered the library. A large troll with an equally large sword had stopped him. By the time Elia had called his warning, Sal had already made two passes at the troll, strategically backing out of the room to restrict his opponent's movement. The confines of the hall were more suited to his thrusting style than the massive ax that the troll wielded.

He swung regardless, but Sal dodged, returning the cut with a thrust that bounced off of armor. His enemy's eyes were hard, cold, and calculating. His face betrayed no emotion, and he had clearly done this many times before. A second swing of the pitted ax fared no better, though, knocking a large chunk from the wall. In the opening, Sal drew first blood with a draw cut to the troll's shoulder. He backed up, and on the next swing, leapt into the air, arcing over his opponent's head. For a moment, he faced a broad back, but before he could strike, the troll turned, charging him. In an adrenaline-inspired burst of speed, Sal ducked and raised his sword. The troll's swing missed, and his charge buried Kendry's Blade up to the hilt in his gut.

Sal backed into the library, clearing his sword. His heart was pounding. There was no sound from the hallway and the first signs of smoke in the air. Were they so desperate that they would burn their own men? A flash of movement caught his eye, and he turned, a dagger swooping through the air where he had been. A skinny human faced him, eyebrows raised and mouth gaping in surprise. In one motion, Sal had disarmed and disabled him. Seconds passed while his breath was the only sound.

"Hello, Throbasalini! I've dealt with your friend. Will you dance?" Her voice drifted cheerfully, through the air across the hallway, mesmerizing him.

"If you dance as well as your warrior or your thief, I would be delighted," he responded, trying to shake off whatever she was doing to him.

"Well, perhaps you'll teach me a new one then. Will you join me in the bedroom?"

"Dear lady, I'm a bit tired from the exertion. Perhaps another time?" And with that, he charged across the hallway, passing Elia's prone body, and catching her completely by surprise. He killed her in one stroke where she sat. There was silence, except for the crackling of flames below. He walked into the hall and examined Elia. The elf was still breathing, but unconscious. A footstep on the stair alerted him. There

was another one! He stood, sword ready, pressed against the wall. A large form detached itself from the shadows of the stairs. It wielded a crossbow, aimed at him.

Before Sal could move, the figure fired. The bolt cut the air, passing to his side. A miss! There was a thunk and a thud from behind him.

“Get the elf,” Brak ordered, dropping his crossbow. Sal turned to see the female magician lying in the hall behind him, a bolt protruding from just above the wound Sal had placed in her gut.

“Artless magicians won’t stay dead,” he muttered. He gathered Elia on his shoulder, and followed Brak down the stairs. Somewhere along the way, the elf regained consciousness and insisted on walking. He muttered something about Iago and trash and an alley. Sal ran behind the house. Carrying Iago over his shoulder, he returned to the street. The structure was now burning fiercely.

Elia stepped from the building onto the street. His head was pounding and black spots danced in front of his eyes. A thin human with a hooked nose spotted them. His eyes got big and he took off at a run. Through a black haze, Elia threw his spell, and the human toppled, his boots stuck to the ground. Sal caught up with him, and there were two unconscious forms over his shoulder.

“A common thief,” Brak said. “Better to kill him.” Elia drew his dagger, the long, curved, orkish one with the odd runes. He pulled the human’s head back by his hair and unceremoniously cut his throat. Sal glared at him.

Brak led them back to the Battered Windling, where he entered a back room with a nod to the bartender. He lowered his impressive bulk through a well-concealed trapdoor, motioning them to follow. They walked silently through underground tunnels, finally entering a small wooden room lit by an oil lamp. Brak knocked on the wall, closing the door behind them silently and leaving no trace of its existence.

He pulled a vial from his pocket. “Give this to him,” he said, indicating Iago. Sal took the potion and administered it.

“You double-crossed us,” Elia said, his voice weak but threatening. One hand was a fist, the other held his weapon. He pointed the bloody dagger at Brak. “Explain yourself.”

“Put your knife away, elf,” Brak retorted angrily. “I did what I had to. Everyone has their price, and they found mine.” He answered Elia’s objection before it was out, shaking his head, his dark eyes burning

fiercely. “No, it wasn’t money. They knew about a relative of mine in Darben and threatened her. I’ve gotten her to safety, but if I ever mention Kreescra again, don’t trust me.”

Elia still held his dagger. “If you cross us again...” It was an idle threat. He felt ready to pass out. Brak handed him a vial and patted his shoulder.

“A booster potion. It’s the least I can do. I also set a fire to cover your escape. You’ll be safe here until you leave, which I suggest you do soon. You can spend the night upstairs.”

Elia slept fitfully, his night disturbed with dreams.

Charassa 30, 1509

Mother,

The passing of my first year outside the Wood brings me to reflection. The world is indeed a wider place than I know and still I have seen only a part of it. My childish notions of race are gone (I can see your smirk now). But I am distressed. I think back to my youth in the Wood and wonder where that boy has gone. The world is a dark place, full of killing, death, and deception. I am thankful for the Circle, whom I trust with my life.

I remember, almost laughably, seeing Selline’s body, rent by wolves, and running crying to your apron. The sun has set on that child. The fire is quenched but burns hotter again. I left, a brash young elf, but secure in my hubris. I fear that I shall return only too aware of my mortality, seeing daggers and fangs in every shadow. It seems that the world decides only to end me, from the Passions on down. Did I mention that no fewer than three Passions have personally derided me? They acted with reason.

My first taste of power was sweet, like wine after work. I have tasted its bitter tang, though. I am the executioner’s ax. I remove the heads of convicts with unparalleled sharpness, but dull at the first stroke on a tree.

Yet I can see no alternative. Those who live today threaten me tomorrow. I am surrounded by thorns until I burn my way out.

I remain,

Elia Saral’Drellen

Gahad of Landis

by Dan Grendell

The group that is now known as the Gahad of Landis had its humble beginnings in Barsaive, when three Orks, a Cavalryman, an Illusionist, and a Weaponsmith, left their home Kaer in search of adventure. Many were the Horrors they faced, and long was their journey. Eventually, the three tired of their lifestyle and began searching for something more: someplace they could call home. Drawn by stories of floating cities and incomparable wealth, the three crossed the Twilight Peaks and continued south, passing through the remnants of the ancient Ork kingdom of Cara Fahd. After a time they reached Landis, and decided to settle among its lofty boughs and rich trading villages. They built houses there, and, despite the suspicious nature of the Landisians, became upstanding members of the community. Those were happy years for the three, but they came to an end at the hands of Theraan raiders.

Situated on the fringes of Landis, the village the three inhabited had little trade with Thera, so when the slavers arrived, they were not recognized immediately for what they were. This made the capture of the entire town quite easy: the Theraans killed the old villagers and the children, and hauled the rest off as slaves. Only the three, hidden by the Illusionist's magic, escaped the notice of the brutal slavers. Their responses were drastically different, but were all aimed at the same purpose: the utter destruction of the custom of slavery. The Cavalryman spent some time searching out an Adept who would teach him the ways of the Archer, so that he would be well-rounded enough to fight the slavers successfully. The Illusionist began setting up small caches of supplies all over the forests of Landis, preparing for the day when the three would come together again to fight the Theraans. The Weaponsmith took the most

drastic step: she took a new Name and began life anew as a Liberator. Calling herself Ashenmouth, for she truly meant to live dancing on the edge of Death's knife blade, she began rescuing slaves by the ones and twos, preparing the ways back to Barsaive that she hoped would soon be filled with hundreds of free people.

Upon the return of the Archer, the three reunited, binding themselves with a Name: the Gahad of Landis, for they believed they were the heart of freedom in that country. They were quite successful, so much so that they had soon collected a following of about two hundred other freedom-loving people, mostly Orks. The Gahad were quick to utilize these warriors, and spread them all over the forests so they could not be easily destroyed. From time to time, the Gahad and their followers mount raids on Lankarden and assaults on Jerucz. The assaults have had little effect so far, but the raids have been so successful that



security measures in Lankarden have been stepped up. The raids follow the following plan: the Illusionist enters the city, masking himself in one of several false identities there, and sneaks the Liberator in. The Liberator prepares the slaves, and, when the Archer and his followers attack to provide a distraction, leads them out of Lankardis and back to a camp, where they are quickly prepared and sent back over the mountains to Barsaive. The Lankardens are getting wise to this, however, and the Gahad will have to change their plans soon as the risks get greater and greater.

The followers of the Gahad number about 1/2 Adepts, mostly Warriors and Cavalrymen, with the rest being simple farmers turned warriors. The Cavalrymen are all mounted, mostly on horses but sometimes on Thundra Beasts, and the rest of the followers travel either on foot or by boat. There are several T'Skrang among them who handle the problem of getting the followers across rivers, and some Windlings who act as scouts in the forest and carry messages between camps. The majority of Landisians will have little to do with the Gahad, and indeed will turn them in if given the chance, so the locations of the different camps are kept quite secret and moved often. Aside from some assaults on the forest by the soldiers of Jerucz, there has been little overt military response from Thera, but the Illusionist has noticed a changing level of military force in Lankarden and suspects that this might change soon.

Involving the Gahad

- If the players are in Barsaive, have them hear a rumor of the Gahad and the advances they are making. This by itself may be enough to draw them to Landis.
- If they are in Landis or Vivane Province, have them captured as slaves. Let them try to escape on their own; if they can't, bring in Ashenmouth and introduce them to the Gahad.
- If one of the characters is a Lightbearer, have him sent on a mission to investigate the Gahad and see if they are worthy to join.
- Of course, the Gahad can make quite interesting NPCs. Have the characters meet the Illusionist in one of his false guises in Lankarden, or run into the Archer during a trip through the forests.

NPC Statistics

The Gahad of Landis is the Name chosen for their Group by Gerrick, Ashenmouth, and Arta and it has a Group True Pattern, with all that entails. Threads

woven to this Pattern are noted in character descriptions. The followers of the Gahad also call themselves by that Name, but are not part of the Group and do not have access to the Group True Pattern.

Gerrick Dral

Sixth circle Cavalryman/ Seventh Circle Archer
Male Ork

DEX: 16 **STR: 16** **TOU: 13**
PER: 14 **WIL: 11** **CHA: 7**

Initiative: 8/2d6 (7/d12) **Physical Defense: 10 (12)**
Number of Attacks: 1 **Spell Defense: 8 (10)**
Attack: special **Social Defense: 5**
Melee 14/d20+d4
Missile 14/d20+d4
Damage:

Warhammer: 14/d20+d4, Thread Longbow: 14/d20+d4

Armor: 5 **Mystic Armor: 2**
Knockdown: 7/d12 **Recovery Tests: 2 /d10**
Wound Threshold: 9
Death Rating: 84/77
Unconsciousness: 69/62
Combat Move: 42 **Full Move: 85**
Legendary Status: 2

Equipment:

Warhammer
Thundra Hide Armor
Thread Longbow with Rank 3 Thread
Thundra Beast
Targeting eye (right)
Desperate Blow Blood Tattoo (sun on face)
Rune-carved arrow (Group Pattern Item)

Talents:

Melee Weapons 7: 14/d20+d4
Animal Bond 6: 10/d10+d6
Anticipate Blow 5: 11/d10+d8
Avoid Blow 7: 14/d20+d4
Bank Shot 7: 14/d20+d4*
Blood Share 6: 12/2d10*
Call Arrow 6: 12/2d10*
Charge 6: 13/d12+d10*
Direction Arrow 7: 13/d12+d10*
Durability 7
Durability (Mount) 6
Empathic Command 6: 11/d10+d8*
Flame Arrow 7: 15/d20+d6* (16/d20+d8)

Karma Ritual (Archer) 7
 Karma Ritual (Cavalryman) 6
 Missile Weapons 7: 14/d20+d4* (18/d20+d12)
 Mystic Aim 7: 13/d12+d10*
 Spirit Mount 6: 12/2d10*
 Sprint 7
 Stopping Aim 7: 11/d10+d8*
 Sure Mount 6: 13/d12+d10*
 Thread Weaving (Archer) 7: 13/d12+d10*
 Thread Weaving (Cavalryman) 6: 12/2d10*
 Throwing Weapons 7: 14/d20+d4
 True Shot 7: 14/d20+d4
 Wheeling Attack 6: 13/d12+d10
 Wheeling Defense 6: 13/d12+d10*
 Wound Balance 7: 14/d20+d4

Skills:

Disguise 3: 9/d8+d6
 Heroes of Landis 2: 8/2d6
 Ork History 3: 9/d8+d6
 Rune Carving 3: 7/d12
 Tactics 4: 10/d10+d6
 Wilderness Survival 3: 9/d8+d6

Karma: 17

Talent Knacks: Explosive Flame Arrow, Placed Shot

Threads woven to Group Pattern: Rank 4 to Missile Weapons Talent, Rank 2 to Physical Defense, Rank 2 to Spell Defense, Rank 1 to Flame Arrow Talent

Special: Gerrick may spend Karma on any action using Dexterity, on a Recovery Test, on any action other than Damage Tests taken by his mount, and to increase the damage of a missile attack.

Commentary: Easily recognizable by a large facial tattoo of a flaming sun, Gerrick spends little time in the cities. He trains the Gahad in tactics and strategy, as well as how to use their weapons. His own gahad is triggered by the killing of an innocent and by being robbed. He is quick to anger, but equally quick to friendship. Prone to harsh mood swings, Gerrick is often tortured by the memory of the destruction of his village.

Ashenmouth

Seventh Circle Liberator
 Ork Female

DEX: 16 **STR: 17** **TOU: 19**
PER: 11 **WIL: 15** **CHA: 11**

Initiative: 7/d12 **Physical Defense: 10 (13)**
Number of Attacks: 1 **Spell Defense: 8**

Attack: **Social Defense: 8**
Melee: 14/d20+d4
Missile: 10/d10+d6
Damage:
 Two-handed Sword: 14/d20+d4, Shortsword:
 11/d10+d8, Troll Sling: 11/d10+d8
Armor: 10 **Mystic Armor: 4**
Knockdown: 7/d12 **Recovery Tests: 3/2d6**
Wound Threshold: 12
Death Rating: 92/90 **Unconsciousness: 77/75**
Combat Move: 42 **Full Move: 85**
Legendary Status: 2

Equipment:

Thread Chain Mail with Rank 4 Thread
 Two-handed Sword
 Troll Sling
 Short Sword
 Broken Shackle (Group Pattern Item)

Talents:

Dead Fall 7: 13/d12+d10
 Durability 7
 False Shackles 7: 14/d20+d4
 Free Mind 7: 12/2d10*
 Freedom Search 7: 12/2d10*
 Freedom Song 7: 12/2d10* (16/d20+d8)
 Heart of Freedom 7: 13/d12+d10*
 Karma Ritual 7
 Lion Spirit 7
 Lock Pick 7: 14/d20+d4
 Melee Weapons 7: 14/d20+d4 (17/d20+d10)
 Mind Armor 7: 12/2d10*
 Mind Blade 7
 Power Mask 6: 12/2d10
 Ritual of Atonement 7: 13/d12+d10
 Shackle Shrug 7: 14/d20+d4*
 Shout of Justice 6: 11/d10+d8*
 Thread Weaving 7: 12/2d10*
 Unarmed Combat 7: 14/d20+d4

Skills:

Acting 4: 9/d8+d6
 Disguise 2: 7/d12
 History of Landis 2: 7/d12
 Legends of Hrak Gron 3: 8/2d6
 Missile Weapons 3: 10/d10+d6
 Wilderness Survival 3: 8/2d6

Karma: 22

Threads woven to Group Pattern: Rank 4 to Freedom Song Talent, Rank 3 to Physical Defense,

Rank 3 to Melee Weapons Talent

Special: Ashenmouth may spend a point of Karma on any action using Willpower.

Commentary: Ashenmouth has dedicated her life to freeing slaves. To show her commitment to her duty, she changed her Name, losing all she was before and becoming only Ashenmouth, protector of liberty. She spends her every waking moment planning the next raid, and often has to be reminded to eat. Gerrick has predicted that her obsession will kill her, but she doesn't care- she will work as long as she can, then go to her grave satisfied. Her gahad is the sound of a whip and being unable to breathe.

Arta Drallan

Seventh Circle Illusionist

Male Ork

DEX: 11 **STR: 17** **TOU: 15**
PER: 17 **WIL: 16** **CHA: 13**

Initiative: 5/d8 **Physical Defense:** 7 (9)
Number of Attacks: 1 **Spell Defense:** 10
Attack: **Social Defense:** 8

Melee: 9/d8+d6
Missile: 8/2d6
Damage:
Broadsword: 12/2d10
Sling: 9/d8+d6
Armor: 4
Knockdown: 7/d12
Wound Threshold: 10
Death Rating: 66/61
Full Move: 60
Legendary Status: 2

Equipment:

Broadsword
Sling
Padded Leather Armor
Desperate Spell Charm
Grimoire
Circle 4 Talisman
Spell Matrix Staff with Rank 4 Thread
Embroidered Robe (Group Pattern Item)

Talents:

Anticipate Blow 7: 14/d20+d4
Dead Fall 7: 14/d20+d4*
Disguise Self 7: 14/d20+d4*
Durability 7
Engaging Banter 7: 13/d12+d10

Enhanced Matrix 7

Enhanced Matrix 7

False Sight 7: 14/d20+d4*

Fast Hand 6: 13/d12+d10

Karma Ritual 7

Read/Write Language 7: 14/d20+d4 (all racial tongues)

Read/Write Magic 7: 14/d20+d4*

Speak Language 7: 14/d20+d4 (all racial tongues)

Spell Matrix 7 (4)

Spellcasting 8: 15/d20+d6* (20/d20+d8+d6)

Thread Weaving 8: 15/d20+d6* (18/d20+d12)

Willforce 7

Skills:

Bribery 3: 8/2d6

History of the Scourge 2: 9/d8+d6

Melee Weapons 4: 9/d8+d6

Missile Weapons 3: 8/2d6

Robe Embroidery 3: 9/d8+d6

Theran Politics 3: 10/d10+d6

Wilderness Survival 3: 10/d10+d6

Karma: 19

Talent Knacks: Forced Spellcasting, Signature Spells

Threads woven to Group Pattern: Rank 5 to Spellcasting Talent, Rank 3 to Thread Weaving Talent, Rank 2 to Physical Defense

Special: Arta may spend Karma on any action using Dexterity, and may use Glamour (ED, pg. 74).

Spells: All of Circle 1-5, plus Bouncing Blaster, Illusory Missiles, Chosen Path, Rebel Limb, Walk Through, and Memory Scribe.

Commentary: Arta is a congenial and happy fellow, his facade as a merchant never wavering when he is in the city. In the woods, he reverts to his normal demeanor: he is still happy, but he is much more reserved and cautious. The abrupt shift can be disconcerting for some of the people he rescues. Strangely enough, Arta likes that. He normally carries Ephemeral Bolt, True Ephemeral Bolt, You Got Me, and Walk Through in his regular Matrices, Memory Scribe and Wall of Unfire in his Enhanced Matrices, Nobody Here in his Talisman, and Memory Blank and Enter and Exit in his Spell Matrix Staff. His gahad includes being swindled and being touched by Elves.

The Seeker

by Andrew W. Ragland

Finder of lost secrets, preserver of ancient knowledge, and protector of the right and true, the Seeker is much more than a scholar of history. Fervent in her belief that the treasures of the past belong to all the world, the Seeker attempts to recover these items, whether they be books, weapons, art or ideas, and see them enshrined properly where all can benefit from them. Frequently, this requires not only research to discover an item's whereabouts and key knowledges, but pits the Seeker against physical hazards as well. Delving into Horror-infested kaers, quietly invading the private collections of greedy and misguided Name-givers, and standing up for those who cannot protect themselves, the Seeker is found wherever ancient secrets threaten trouble in the modern world. As handy with a sword as a pen, the Seeker is the final bastion between knowledge and those who would use it for evil ends.

Vision

From a lecture by Marac Iannus, Seeker of the Eighth Circle, at the Royal Auditorium of Throal:

Often I am asked, why? Why do you risk your life, sometimes even your soul, to bring back artifacts that have lain undisturbed for centuries? We've gotten along quite well enough without these items since they were mislaid or forgotten. Why spend your life pursuing the past when there is so much to do already in the present?

Because the past haunts us. We are what we are because of what has gone before. The Scourge is in our past. Can we forget it, move on as if it had never happened? Of course not. The coming of the Horrors has forever changed our world. Likewise, every act in the past continues to shape our present. We cannot

forget the past. It comes back to remind us whether we will or no. Anything that once held power or importance will return. Best that it be brought back properly.

We have all heard legends of ancient mystic artifacts used by evil sorcerers to summon forth dread beings, by greedy Name-givers to pillage their neighbors for their own selfish benefit, by the Therans to enslave not only the bodies but the minds of innocent Name-givers. If someone had sought out those artifacts before the evil ones came upon them, had seen them safely placed in the Hall of Records, the museums and schools and treasuries where they could be handled with safety, or locked away if there were to be no safe way to handle them, then these tragic events would never have occurred. Like the Stalkers who seek out Horrors to remove them from the world before they can cause more trouble, the Seeker spends his life seeking out ancient artifacts and ensuring that they are not used for evil ends.

As well, the knowledge of the past can be of great benefit to the present world. We have all heard the tale of Elianar Messias and the Books of Harrow. If the books had not been recovered from the cavern high in the Delaris Mountains, if a valiant Name-giver had not pitted his life and sanity against the perils of finding and translating the works, we might not have survived the Scourge. For the sake of the future, the knowledge of the past must be recovered and brought back into the world. Someone with the right motives and the willingness to see that the knowledge is put to the proper use must seek it out, bring it back and help our world survive the perils that yet await.

I see myself as yet one more protector of our world, a guardian standing with the other adepts to shield the Name-givers from that which would cause them harm. That I take up the fight as often with pen as with sword makes no difference. The fight is the same regardless of the methods.

Mechanics

Attributes: DEX, PER, CHA

Racial Restrictions: None

Karma Ritual:

The Seeker spends an hour memorizing several pages of text from an old work, the more ancient the better. The Seeker then recopies the text from memory, illuminating it in the process, and meditates on the meaning of the ancient text in the current world.

Skills:

History (any, but preferably History of the Scourge, Heroes and Legends or Barsaive History) required. The Seeker must spend a point of Knowledge Skill rank to buy a Research Skill at First Circle. Racial lore Skills are suggested for higher Circles. Languages must be learned whenever possible.

Artisan Skill:

Text Illumination

Talents and Abilities

Circle 1:

Astral Sight

Karma Ritual

Melee Weapons

Read/Write Language*

Silent Walk

Steel Thought*

Knack: Whip Trick

Talent: Melee Weapons

Effect: The adept may use a whip for non-combat purposes, such as removing someone's hat or opening an upstairs window from the ground level. The gamemaster must assign appropriate Difficulty numbers. With an Excellent success against a Difficulty of 9, modified for situations, the Seeker may coil a whip around a projection and swing from the whip as if it were a rope with a grappling hook.

Circle 2:

Durability

Evidence Analysis*

Item History*

Circle 3:

Haggle*

Winning Smile

Knack: Fast Talk

Talent: Haggle

Effect: The Seeker may temporarily confuse people and take advantage of them. In a burst of frantic action and speech, the Seeker overwhelms his target. Make a Haggle Test against the Target's Social Defense. On an Average success, the effect lasts for one combat round, on a Good five rounds, on an Excellent one minute and on an Extraordinary ten minutes. For the duration, the person affected is bewildered and may



not take any action against the Seeker, while the Seeker may take any non-combat action he likes. Any injury, no matter how minor, will disrupt the effect. This knack is frequently used to "borrow" a horse in the middle of a chase, to gain entrance to guarded facilities with an outrageous presentation, and otherwise to get past people who would be too much trouble to fight.

Circle 4:

Read/Write Magic

Threadweaving (History Weaving)*

Karma for PER

Circle 5:

Detect Trap*

Engaging Banter

Endure Weather: Like the Endure Cold Talent, this allows the adept to resist damage from environmental conditions. The adept makes a TOU Test at +5 steps and reduces damage from cold, heat, dehydration, choking rain, etc. by the result, less 3 points lost to Strain. This ability is usable three times per day.

Circle 6:

Speak Language*

Steely Stare

Social Def +1

Circle 7:

Taunt

Trick Riding

Dust Off: Like Fireblood, the Seeker can use Recovery tests by pausing to dust themselves off and shake off the damage. A cloud of dust flies away from the Seeker whether or not they were actually dirty. Two points of Recovery are lost to Strain each time. Usable 3 times per day.

Circle 8:

Conceal Weapon

True Sight*

Spell Def +1

Circle 9:

Book Memory

Book Recall

Graceful Exit

Physical Def +1

Circle 10:

Memorize Image*

Slough Blame

Karma for CHA

Recovery Step +1

proper use. This may mean a second journey as arduous as the first, made perhaps more dangerous by pursuit if the artifact was recovered from someone the Seeker considered the wrong hands. Far from being regarded as trouble, though, this only helps to feed the soul of the Seeker. Movement and adventure are the meat and drink of the Discipline. The Seeker throws himself into the adventure, improvising as necessary. Seekers don't usually plan very far ahead, figuring they can make it up as they go along. A great deal of being a Seeker involves trusting in luck and your own abilities, relying on the universe favoring people who act in defense of the right and true. Many Seekers follow Floranuus, with a smaller percentage following Mynbruje.

Playing a Seeker means trusting that things will work out, not only in the larger scheme but in the smaller. If coin runs short, no matter. Something will come along to provide lodging and food. If a mount dies in the middle of a pursuit, fate will provide a new one, even if it has to be stolen. The right people will be met at the right time. Any fortuitous meeting is obviously part of the grand scheme, intended to place the Seeker where they need to be to further their quest.

Players should remember that the Seeker exists at the intersection of the wizard and the swordmaster. It is not enough to seek knowledge. It must be pursued with style. Knowing that you are in the right and that fortune favors you lends a certain cockiness to flavor the self-confident attitude. For many Seekers, self-reliance can be seen as, and maybe even shade into, self-centeredness. They know for a complete and utter certainty that they are doing the right thing, and that they will come out ahead in the end. Injury, failure and death come as a complete shock. Truth and justice must win, or the life of the Seeker has no meaning.

Discipline Violations

Seekers give themselves over to the quest. Finding and recovering a lost item, whether it be an artifact or a secret of ancient lore, is more important than their own survival. Any risk is acceptable -- as long as it only affects the Seeker. Their companions must be protected, even if it means delaying or passing up an opportunity to acquire the object of the quest. Allowing harm to come to a companion can range from a Mild to a Severe violation, depending on the severity of the injury, with the death of a companion constituting a Heinous violation.

Allowing an injustice to exist, especially one that involves ancient lore or artifacts, is unforgivable.

Roleplaying Hints

It's not enough to find lost items. They must be taken to the proper place for study and the right and

If a Seeker is already involved in one quest when he discovers another, he must make a decision, and



quickly, as to which is the more pressing. If there is someone reliable to whom the Seeker can entrust one of the missions, then there is no crisis. Handing over a mission to someone unreliable, however, is a violation of at least Moderate degree, possibly Severe if the person is obviously not going to complete the quest. Failing to turn aside to right an easily-redressed wrong is a Moderate to Heinous violation, depending on the severity of the injustice and whether or not lives are at stake.

Seekers anchor themselves with the belief that they are acting in defense of the right and true. If a Seeker doubts the rightness of her actions, it shakes the foundations of her Discipline. A passing uncertainty is only a Mild violation.

Continued questioning can be a Severe violation. Being shown evidence of the wrongness of an entire course of action constitutes a Heinous violation, requiring the Seeker to correct her mistakes and be absolved of guilt, preferably by a Questor of Mynbruje.

Multiple Discipline Combinations

The Seeker goes well with Disciplines that stress forthright action and honor, or the preservation of knowledge, such as the scout, sky raider and

troubadour. It clashes with Disciplines such as the nethermancer that hold lives in less regard, or that dispense with absolutes of morality, such as the thief.

Special Rules

Special rules for Seekers include using half-magic and special uses of karma.

Using Half Magic

Seekers may use half magic to identify ancient artifacts, to know how to pack them for safe transport, and to determine safe handling of items when found. They may also make half magic rolls to remember legends about a situation they've encountered, and to use any means of travel, including riding a beast or steering a ship. Navigation and tracking falls under this category.

Extreme Karma

To represent the incredible luck of the Seeker, the GM may allow the player to use karma whenever the character takes a wild risk. This is a GM call, and requires the Seeker to be in peril of his life during the direct pursuit of his quest. Whether or not to allow this extra use of karma is up to the gaming group as a whole, as it goes outside the normal Earthdawn rules for karma.

Rituals of Advancement Recruitment

Seekers aren't so much recruited as discovered. Very few Name-givers have the fire within their hearts necessary to dedicate their lives to the quest. More often than not, it's not necessarily a choice made, but a fate found. Most Seekers are people who were dragged into the quest of another Seeker, and found themselves committing to the quest somewhere along the way. Every once in a while, though, a Seeker will spot someone who has within themselves the potential -- the young man who stands frozen with reverent awe before a display case in the Hall of Records, the woman who neglects her job to spend time poring over ancient records out of fascination with what has gone before. These people are approached and examined for possible entry into the order of the Seekers. If they are willing to throw themselves, body, mind and soul, into the pursuit, then they are initiated and set upon the path.

The candidate is given a few vague clues and sent off to find something. What the target of this first quest is will vary wildly according to the candidate and where they're found. For inhabitants of the Halls of Throal, it may be a rare mineral found only in a small section of one of the Inner City caverns, or an obscure fact buried deep in old writings in the Hall of Records. Potential Seekers in small villages may have to bring back a personal possession of one of their neighbors, or an exotic plant found in the surrounding countryside. To pass the test, the candidate must not turn aside for food or sleep, nor for any other mundane reason, until the item has been brought back to the initiating Seeker. The next few years are spent learning the necessary lore and discovering the magical potential needed to learn the Talents of the First Circle.

Novice

Masters of the Discipline normally take novices along on quests of their own, to assist in larger adventures and see how a Seeker of higher Circle accomplishes their tasks. By helping fulfill their master's quest, the novice gains insight into their own lifelong quest for advancement.

Journeyman

The Seeker must complete a quest on their own, locating through research and bringing some ancient secret to light and seeing it safely delivered to a center of learning. Other adepts or non-adept companions may assist, but the Seeker must be primarily responsible for the success of the mission. Afterwards, the Seeker must tell the story of their quest to a master of the Discipline, preferably with an audience to hear how the way of the right and true was preserved.

Warden

Adepts of this rank find their own tests, pitting themselves against evils from the past to prove themselves and gain the necessary insights. Quests of this rank include taking on Horrors, delving into lost cities such as Parlainth, and

infiltrating living legend cults to bring artifacts of deadly power to safety. More than one Seeker has died when their quest to achieve rank at these rarified Circles has failed.

Ghost Master Ritual

An artifact central to a quest of the Ghost Master must be obtained, and studied intently. When the adept has achieved a thorough understanding of the artifact's powers and significance, they must write a treatise on it, all the while meditating on the deeds of the master who recovered the item. With the final stroke of the pen, the Ghost Master is summoned and the ritual continues as normal.



The Badlands

by Andrew Ragland

 Covering the inhabitable regions of Barsaive may be the more comfortable approach to cataloging the animals and plants of our world, but it is not the most useful. The impact of the Scourge can be best seen in areas that still suffer from the ravages of the Horrors. Herewith are a series of records describing creatures found in the Badlands.

Latch Bat

The latch bat represents both a hope for the recovery of the damaged lands, and a hazard, albeit an incidental one, to traveling Name-givers. In appearance a dark bat with small ears and a pale, yellowish underbelly, they have a wingspan as long as my arm from shoulder to finger-tip. Latch bats roost in the scrubby trees of the Badlands. Their primary diet is fruit, and as such, they, like their cousins in more hospitable climes, distribute seeds in their droppings. Some of the plants of the Badlands will not grow unless the seeds they spring from have passed through the digestive tract of a bat. Being airborne creatures and voracious eaters, they range over large areas, scattering seeds throughout and assisting in the reforestation of the region.

Latch bats are the favored prey of hell hounds, and this leads into the hazard they pose to Name-givers. The hounds use their power to breathe fire as a hunting tactic, roasting their prey in mid-air. The bats, in turn, have developed a tough, leathery hide that resists brief applications of flame. Unfortunately, in order to be able to reproduce and suckle their young, the bats have had to retain a soft fur over their undersides, which remains highly vulnerable to fire. Thus, the bats have developed a defensive maneuver that gave rise to their Name.

Upon sighting a potential predator, or when frightened, the bats fly to the nearest large object, normally a tree, and latch themselves down belly to bark, using the tree to shield their more sensitive parts.

They stay locked down securely until the danger passes. The problem here is that latch bats aren't terribly bright. From personal experience, they can't tell the difference between a Name-giver and a tree. Their claws are very sharp, capable of penetrating leather. Having a dozen or more seek shelter against you is disconcerting and painful. Not only do you suffer many small injuries from their claws, but you cannot move without them digging in for a better grip. If they have sought the high ground, so to speak, you may not even be able to see. Depending upon what they are seeking shelter from, this can be a very dangerous situation.

What's more, a flock of latch bats may consist of twenty to two hundred adults and infants. While the infants remain in the nesting area, guarded by one of the parents while the other hunts, this still leaves enough latch bats in a flock to completely engulf a party of half a dozen travelers. Fortunately, the bats are easily dissuaded by open flames. A party using torches instead of light quartz or closed lanterns for their light source is at very little peril from latch bat flocks. This is one case where going to more advanced technologies may be a bad idea.

Adventure Hook

A Questor of Jaspree wants the adepts to protect a colony of latch bats against a mining company. The miners are convinced, right or wrong, that great wealth lies beneath the ground in the vicinity of the colony, and they're tired of being swarmed. The company is bringing in a load of oil and alcohol, intending to burn out the bats. The Questor wants the roosting grounds protected, and will be irate if the adepts kill any of the bats in the process.

Game Mechanics

DEX	10	STR	8	TOU4
PER	3	WIL	5	CHA3

Initiative: 13
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 13

Physical Defense: 13
Spell Defense: 4
Social Defense: 4

Damage: 8
Number of Spells: 0
Spellcasting: 0
Effect: 0

Armor: 2 (10 vs fire)
Mystic Armor: 10
Knockdown: 7
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 28
Wound Threshold: 7
Unconsciousness Rating: 19

Combat Movement: 15
Full Movement: 30
Flight: 80/160

Legend Points: 170
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Notes: The bat latches onto its target on a successful attack test, and makes no further attack tests unless picked loose and cast back into the air. The optional damage to armor rules may be useful. Make an

opposed STR test against a latch bat to pick it off. Prying one loose against its will does half the latching damage to the character it was attached to, but does half the prying character's STR test result in damage to the bat. Striking a bat that's already latched causes it to dig in its claws, again doing half the latching damage. Once dead, a bat may be picked loose without causing additional damage. Any character with three or more latch bats clinging to them is Harried.

Kobopor

A distant relative of the dyre, the kobopor is a large, irascible and thoroughly nonintelligent herd animal native to the Badlands. While in size and build it approximates its cousin, its coat is substantially thicker, and mats together to form a stiff felt tougher

than sail canvas. Its primary food and preferred habitat are the thorny scrubs that fill the low areas of the region. The kobopor's thick pelt fends off the brambles, keeping the beast from being damaged by its provender. Blood elves should be careful around the kobopor. Its wits are so abysmally dim that it assumes anything bearing thorns is edible, and being capable of chewing through brambles, it can do considerable damage to the limbs of an incautious Name-giver.

The nomads in the region hunt it for meat and for its pelt. Separated into felted fur and leather, it serves double duty as fabric and waterproof covering for tents and cloaks, as long as one does not mind smelling like a kobopor. Any treatment capable of ridding the coat of its distinctive musky odor unmats the hair, leaving a coarse mass of strands requiring substantial further work to then be useful.

Its foul temper makes it unsuitable for domestication. The kobopor generally does not get along well with other herbivores, perceiving them in a vague and muddled way as competitors for the food supply. The males do not take kindly to trolls. Considering



that, like most animals in the Badlands, the kobopor turns savage when in rut, it's quite possible that the males consider anything with horns as a potential rival. I have not had the opportunity to observe interactions between kobopor and outcast trolls, so I cannot confirm or deny the idea that horns are the trigger. I can only state definitively that kobopor barely tolerate each other, and show no willingness to peacefully coexist with anything other than rocks and thorn bushes.

Adventure Hook

A merchant from Anghali G'hosteren believes that the kobopor can in fact be domesticated, and that its coat will earn him a fortune in the market. To this end, he's hired a tribe of Dinganni and a couple of Vorst, figuring that between the nomads' experience and the Vorsts' determination, they should be able to bring the obstreporous beasts under control. However, he needs a team of adepts to escort his workers into and back out of the Badlands, and protect them and the herd from the environmental dangers. Somewhere along the way, the herdsman may also need help with the kobopors.

Game Mechanics

DEX: 6	STR: 16	TOU: 16
PER: 4	WIL: 8	CHA: 4
Initiative: 8		
Number of Attacks: 1		
Attack: 11		
Damage:		
Horns 16		
Hooves 18		
Number of Spells: 0		
Spellcasting: 0		
Effect: 0		
Physical Defense: 8		
Spell Defense: 6		
Social Defense: 7		
Armor: 10		
Mystic Armor: 5		
Knockdown: 22		
Recovery Tests: 8		
Death Rating: 76		
Wound Threshold: 22		
Unconsciousness Rating: 69		
Combat Movement: 35		
Full Movement: 70		
Legend Points: 400		
Equipment: None		
Loot: None		
Notes: Armor made from the hide of a kobopor, if prepared correctly, retains an armor rating of 6, a mystic armor rating of 2 and its weatherproof qualities, providing 3 points of protection against weather damage, such as cold. Due to its bulk,		

however, kobopor hide armor cannot be worn by anyone smaller than a full-grown ork. It also retains its pungent odor. Kobopors attack aggressively after the first round and never break off combat. The typical herd consists of thirty to fifty adults and half as many young.

Jeweled Lizard

There are those who believe that the basilisk is the most dangerous creature normally encountered in the Badlands. I say that this is not so, that the greatest danger lies in the beasts that hunt the basilisks. Every creature has its predator, and the basilisk is no exception. Jeweled lizards are swifter, more savage and tend to hunt in packs, giving them a better chance to bring down their dangerous quarry. Upon seeing a basilisk, one should immediately check the surrounding area. Not all that glitters is gold.

The jeweled lizard takes its name from its appearance, both natural and applied. Its scales are faceted like a gem, reflecting and refracting light. This scatters the eyelight of its prey, a vital consideration for the night-hunting lizards. As well, the lizard protects its face, which is not as heavily scaled as the rest of its body, by gluing bits of mica and other shiny stones to its skin with its saliva, giving it the appearance of wearing a jeweled mask. The combination of reflective scales and mask, together with a strong natural resistance to magical attack, makes the jeweled lizard a formidable foe to basilisks – as well as to magic-dependent Name-givers.

The jeweled lizard prefers to stalk its prey from ambush, remaining in cover and thus protected from the ranged assaults of its prey until ready to strike. If a member of the hunting pack is glimpsed, it may be mistaken for a natural rock outcropping, or a for a deposit of precious minerals, with disastrous results for the greedy. The typical hunting pack consists of a mated pair of adults, possibly with one to four young, or a trio of pre-mating-age adolescents. They prefer to flank their prey, one lizard drawing its attention and the rest then attacking from the rear, striking first to cripple, then making the killing stroke once their victim lies helpless. They are successful in hunting their preferred prey more often than not, partially due to these tactics and partially due to their ability to lay open a basilisk with a single clawstroke.

Fortunately, jeweled lizards seem to be bright enough to tell the difference between a t'skrang and a basilisk. Unfortunately, like most predators, they are

highly territorial. Anything they perceive as another predator encroaching on their hunting grounds will be attacked with neither hesitation nor quarter.

The basic rules seem to be these: When traveling in the Badlands, avoid the company of basilisks, never a bad idea. Be cautious investigating shiny bits glimpsed at a distance, especially at night and when they are partially concealed behind a boulder or outcropping. Watch for assault from behind, and always assume that there are more opponents than one can see.

Better yet, avoid the Badlands entirely.

Adventure Hook

A wizard of high Circle has hired the adepts to retrieve the eyes of a basilisk for a petrification spell he's working on, with the promise that as part of the payment, he will teach it to the party wizard. The problem is, the basilisk the adepts are trailing has wandered into the hunting grounds of a jeweled lizard pack. In the ensuing three-way fight, can the adepts retrieve the basilisk's eyes and get out with their own skins intact?

Game Mechanics

DEX: 10 **STR: 10** **TOU: 6**
PER: 5 **WIL: 7** **CHA: 5**

Initiative: 12	Physical Defense: 13
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 15
Attack: 12	Social Defense: 7
Damage: 15	Armor: 3
Number of Spells: 0	Mystic Armor: 12
Spellcasting: None	Knockdown: 10
Effect: None	Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 36 **Combat Movement: 80**
Wound Threshold: 10 **Full Movement: 160**
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Legend Points: 630

Equipment: None

Loot: The hide is worth 300 silvers, and is treasure worth Legend Points.

Notes: The hide can be made into cloaks, like espagra skin; they provide no physical armor but 5 points of mystic protection, which is cumulative with other armor. To remove the hide without destroying the mystic qualities requires a magician to make a half-magic test against a Difficulty Number of 13. Such a cloak can fetch as much as 1000 silvers.

While pretty much everything living in the Badlands has a foul attitude (and who could reasonably expect otherwise?), the norimoc carries itself so pugnaciously that its Name translates loosely as "bad-tempered rock". A small herbivore subsisting on ground cover and fallen seeds and fruits, it survives through a combination of armor and a willingness to attack creatures fourteen times its size, backing up its attitude with a virulent poison.

One of the stranger creatures of the Badlands, in appearance the norimoc resembles a large rat outfitted with barding. Somewhere between bony plates and scales, its armor wraps in overlapping sections from side to side, from belly over the back and down again. When frightened (which rarely happens) or overwhelmed, it rolls itself into a ball, tucking its nose, paws and tail into the center and presenting the world with the semblance of a large stone. It also sleeps in this posture, and does not appreciate being awakened, which I believe gave rise to its Name.

Its bite is a last-ditch effort, used only when squealing, clawing at the ground, and charging do not put the enemy off its stride. Equipped with snake-like fangs that fold out of the way when not in use, the average norimoc can slay two or three trolls before its venom sacs run dry. I do not know of any medicinal use for its venom, although I am certain that there is someone, somewhere, willing to pay for the sacs.

Norimocs live in widely scattered groups, barely tolerating each other's company. They are quick, though, to band together against a common enemy. During the mating season, they fight savagely amongst themselves, irrespective of gender. This sort of behavior is common in the Badlands, ensuring that only the strongest are able to reproduce. When in rut, norimocs skip posturing and threatening and move straight on to the attack. Starting just a few days after the Earth-time, and for the rest of the month of Raquas, Name-givers should avoid the feeding grounds of these vicious little beasts. Norimocs are quite capable of taking your horse out from under you, then turning their attention on the rider once you are down at their level.

Adventure Hook

A mysterious woman hires the party to retrieve the poison sacs of a dozen norimocs. While she presents herself as a healer engaged in research, she actually intends to take them back to Kratas, to be used in the internecine warfare among the gangs. A slim clue, such as her accent, or a tattoo briefly glimpsed, gives the adepts a chance to prevent a round of assassination, if they can stop her.

Game Mechanics

DEX: 8	STR: 4	TOU: 6
PER: 3	WIL: 3	CHA: 4
Initiative: 9	Physical Defense: 10	
Number of Attacks: 3	Spell Defense: 4	
Attack: 10	Social Defense: 10	
Damage: Claw 8	Armor: 5	
Claw 8	Mystic Armor: 3	
Bite 9	Knockdown: 10	
Number of Spells: 1 (poison)		
Spellcasting: 14	Recovery Tests: 3	
Effect: 15		
Death Rating: 36	Combat Movement: 42	
Wound Threshold: 10	Full Movement: 85	
Unconsciousness Rating: 28		
Legend Points: 195		
Equipment: None		
Loot: None		

Notes:

Poison sacs are worth 100 silvers for a full set. Extracting them without damage requires a Dexterity Test (or appropriate Skill, such as Animal Healing) against a Difficulty Number of 18. Norimocs rally to each other outside of their mating season. Each round of combat, another 1d4-1 norimocs will show up to join the battle, with a maximum of twenty in the group.



Non-Adepts

by Carsten Damm

Only one out of twenty Name-givers is able to become an adept. Countless tales and legends exist about those Heroes. But what is with the rest of society? Adepts have no right being the only ones to go adventuring. On the small scale, there are many experienced Adventurers who do not follow the Adept's Way. Be it an ordinary soldier, archer, artisan or outlaw of any kind, there are more people adventuring than you may think.

*Nabi-Ramyan
Traveller Scholar*

Life as a non-adept is a lot more dangerous than the life of any adept. Non-Adepts are not able to use magic in the way Adepts do. The use of skills (which use a very limited amount of magic) enables them to become Adventurers and travel the lands of Barsaive, eventually becoming soldiers, mercenaries, scholars or traders.

Presented here are some guidelines to create non-adepts of any kind. It could be fun to start a campaign with non-adepts who set out to learn the adept's way. Gamemasters can create challenging, intelligent NPC's who have much experience. Some non-adepts might even be able to gain Legendary status.

Creating a Non-Adept Character

Since skills can be learned by anyone, there are virtually no restrictions when choosing a profession for the character. The only real important point is the generation of attributes. Fighters should be tough and fast, while educated characters such as advocates should be intelligent and aware.

1. Choose Profession

There are many professions available for non-adept characters, from simple artisans to mercenaries. Listed below are many suggestions. Feel free to add your own.

2. Choose a Race

There are no real restrictions since your character has no discipline to follow. Your race will determine your background and racial abilities. Please note that human non-adepts do not start with the Versatility talent!

3. Generate Attributes

As stated above, the generation of attributes is only important for your profession. Use the standard methods to generate the attributes. Do not forget to modify the attributes for the chosen race.

4. Determine Characteristics

Use the standard method to determine your characters characteristics.

5. Assign Skill Ranks

Each profession listed below has a short list of necessary and useful skills. Players who want to generate a non-adept should apply a total of ten Skill Ranks to both necessary and useful skills. Please note that all necessary skills must have at least one Skill rank applied.

Gamemasters who want to create a NPC just apply appropriate skill ratings. Any other skills can be learned to create a well-rounded character.

6. Equip the Character

Players can start with the usual 120 silver pieces. Gamemaster characters are assigned the appropriate equipment.

7. Flesh out the Character

As per standard rules.

Professions

Below are several professions that can be followed by NPC's. This list is not complete and should only act as a guideline. Every character following one of the listed professions must have all of the necessary skills; he is free to have some or all of the useful skills. He can learn any other skill that seems appropriate for that character.



Advocate

When it comes to law, Advocates are representatives of their defendants with an intimate knowledge of the law and the people who administer it. They are described more fully in *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*, pp. 65-68.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Knowledge: Law	Knowledge: Politics
Research	Bribery
Etiquette	Conversation
Read/Write Language	Speak Language
	First Impression

Alchemist

Alchemists and Charm-Makers produce many potions other helpful adventuring aids. They also create Blood Charms, as described in *Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets*, pp. 55-58.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Alchemy	Cold Purify
Knowledge: Alchemy and Potions	Arcane Mutterings
Read/Write Language	Haggle
Knowledge: Herbs & Plants	Research

Archer

Ordinary archers can be found anywhere: in the services of the city watch, as part of any army or just travelling the lands.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Missile Weapons	Avoid Blow
Melee Weapons	Called Shot
Arrow Fletching	Climbing
	Throwing Weapons
	Hunting
	Wound Balance

Assassin

Assassins are hired by many people and organizations. If someone needs someone else to be out of the way, assassins are used to do the dirty work.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Silent Walk	Acrobatics
Surprise Strike	Avoid Blow
Climbing	Throwing Weapons
Conceal Weapon	Tracking
Melee Weapons	Streetwise

Boatman & Air Sailor

They are the main crew of every vessel floating in the sky or in the waters of Barsaive's rivers, do most of the hard work when it comes to load or unload cargo.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Pilot Boat /Air Sailing	Climbing
Navigation	Melee Weapons
	Avoid Blow
	Great Leap
	Swimming
	Read River

Bodyguard

Bodyguards protect nobles and merchants and anyone who cannot afford an adept for this task.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Melee Weapons	Throwing Weapons
Anticipate Blow	Conceal Weapon
Avoid Blow	Maneuver
Unarmed Combat	Missile Weapons

City Watch & Soldier

The city watch forms the protecting force of every city and town big enough to provide one. Some cities are big enough to have its own army.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Knowledge: Law	Evidence Analysis
Avoid Blow	Knowledge: Local Lore
Melee Weapons	Knowledge: Military
Streetwise / Tactics	Organization

Troubadour

Ordinary troubadours sing songs on the streets, in taverns or support troubadour-adepts with their instruments when one is in town.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Performing Arts	Court Dancing
Emotion Song	Etiquette
Knowledge: Legends & Heroes	Conversation
First Impression	Acting
Storytelling	

Hunter

Hunters and trappers are found in the forests of Barsaive. Sometimes, they sell hides and meat to villages. They are seldom found in the jungles, because the jungles are far more dangerous than the forests.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Wilderness Survival	Animal Bond
Creature Analysis	Animal Handling
Hunting	Haggle
Tracking	Evidence Analysis
Missile Weapons	Melee Weapons
Knowledge: Creature Lore	

Scout & Mapmaker

Scouts often work for caravans while mapmakers try to bring the newly explored land down on parchment. A good map is the best thing not to get lost in the wilderness.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Wilderness Survival	Mapmaking
Tracking	Research
Navigation	Knowledge: Barsaive Lore
Hunting	
Melee Weapons	

Merchant

Merchants can be found in towns and cities,



where they have their shops. Some are wealthy and run caravans through Barsaive, others travel the lands by themselves, selling something here, buying something there.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Haggle	Fence
Evaluate	Bribery
Read/Write Language	Streetwise
First Impression	

Messenger

Messengers travel between the cities to deliver letters, packages and news. This is often a very dangerous, but lucrative job, since virtually everyone needs a delivery service.

Necessary Skills:	Useful Skills:
Navigation	Tracking

Wilderness Survival Hunting
 Melee Weapons Etiquette
 Knowledge: Barsaive Lore Trick Riding

Magician's Apprentice

Every magician needs someone he can torture. Some apprentices may even become adepts; others never fully understand the magical theories.

Necessary Skills: **Useful Skills:**
 Research Knowledge: Magical Lore
 Read/Write Language Spellcasting
 Read/Write Magic
 Sweeping

Thief

If every thief was an adept, nothing would be safe. Some of the ordinary thieves steal because they have no other choice, but most of them have other goals.

Necessary Skills: **Useful Skills:**
 Picking Pockets Acting
 Streetwise Disarm Mechanical Trap
 Climbing Disguise
 Fence Forgery
 Evaluate
 Trap Initiative
 Surprise Strike

Smith

Every village needs a blacksmith, who creates tools and horseshoes. Some even create weapons and armor.

Necessary Skills: **Useful Skills:**
 Blacksmithing Forge Armor
 Craftsman Forge Weapon
 Evaluate Knowledge: Ancient
 Weapons
 Haggle

Other Professions

As mentioned above, the given list of professions is not complete. There are many other professions an non-adept can have, be it a scholar or a noble, coachman or slaver (ouch...).

Non-adepts and Legend Points

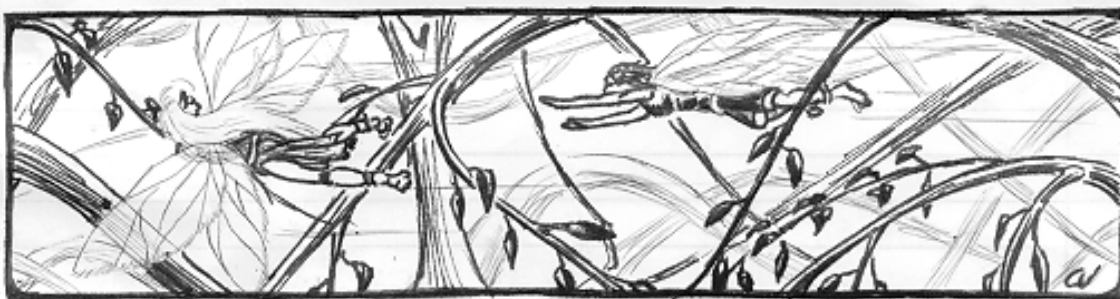
If you are running a campaign with non-adept characters, downtime between adventures will eventually be longer, since learning new skills and increasing skill ranks take much time with the given system. When awarding Legend Points, determine the average Skill Rank from the character's necessary skills and find the corresponding Circle on the Legend Award Table, ED, pp. 242.

For example, Kortak the Messenger has an average Skill Rank of 3 among his necessary skills. His total Legend Award should be 250-900 Legend Points per session.

Karma

Non-Adepts start the game with Karma points, the same as Adepts do. But, since they have no Karma Ritual, they can't replace spent Karma easily. Karma points can be used on Talents learned as Skills. In extraordinary situations, where the lives of the comrades depend on a single roll of dice, the Gamemaster may decide to let the player spend Karma on this roll.

Karma Points can be regained at the end of the adventure, as a reward additional to Legend Points. Karma Points should be awarded as a bonus for good roleplaying and extremely dangerous tasks.



Indifferent Destiny

by Paul Rainey

Lita took a deep breath and stepped through the door of the tavern. In the dim light she could make out a man wiping the bar to the left, and several patrons sitting at tables to the right. One of the drinkers, a large man in chainmail with an elegant longsword strapped to his back, instantly caught her eye. Without missing a beat she marched over to him and thumped her bow on the table to attract his attention.

"Gorlitan," she said with some force, "I have come to face my destiny."

The man looked at her for several long moments before standing up to reveal his massive frame, strong build, and handsome face. His armor gleamed in the feeble light as he placed his dented helmet on his head and dropped some coins on the table. His very presence practically overwhelmed Lita. It was all she could do to avoid giggling and staring at her feet.

Finally, the man spoke. "Sorry," he said, "my name's not Gorlitan." And with that, he walked out the door.

Lita stared after him for a long time before the barman came up and handed her a drink. "So much for first impressions," he said. "It helps if you figure out what your target is before taking aim. Isn't that the archer philosophy?"

He was a stocky fellow, with a slight limp and a nose that had been broken more than once. He sat down at the table and motioned Lita to do the same. She took a sip of the drink, found it was merely fruit juice, and collapsed into a seat.

"Blast," she muttered. "That didn't go very well. But no matter. I can get it right the next time. Do you know where Gorlitan is? I heard he was a regular here."

The man smiled and took a gulp from his own mug. "I'm afraid to say it, but that would be me. Sorry to disappoint you."

Lita's eyes almost popped out of their sockets. "You?" She exclaimed, "You are the famous Gorlitan of the Severed Fingers? You're the one who felled a

thundra beast with one blow? You're the one who single-handedly protected a village from a tribe of ork scorchers?"

Gorlitan gave a mock bow and sighed. "That was a long time ago. Plus, the thundra beast was a young one and ork scorchers are easy to outsmart." His eyes scanned her before resting on the bow she still gripped in one hand. "Ah," he said, "I think I know who you are. You're from the village of Red Creek, right?"

Lita sat up straight and nodded. "Eighteen years ago your adventuring party spent the night at our village. That was the night we were attacked by cadaver men and my mother went into labor. Your friends drove off the monsters while you assisted the midwife and protected our hut."

Gorlitan took another drink from his mug. "Yes, that was quite a night. I'm not a squeamish man, but childbirth is something I'm glad I can avoid. Not sure how woman can handle it. It sure was a relief when that pair of cadaver men broke through the door and I was able to hack them apart."

He took another look at Lita. "Good to see you've improved your looks. I never knew just how red and wrinkled babies can be."

Lita took out a piece of tattered parchment and thumped it on the table. "Two years ago I got this message and this bow. You told me how my fate was to become an adventurer and that power and glory awaited me."

"Did I?" Gorlitan asked. "Well, I was a bit more melodramatic back then. I had actually bought the bow in Throal soon after your birth, with instructions about where to send it in sixteen years. Dwarves are pretty good about commitments like that. I added the note because I feared for your safety. Some strange twists of fate were happening to me at the time, and I was afraid our threads had been intertwined. I figured you were doomed to the adventuring life anyway, so why not give you a little help."

Lita couldn't believe this was happening. She always dreamed of some day meeting this mysterious hero of her birth and following in his footsteps. "My mother named me after you," she said.

"Did she?" he asked. "That was nice of her. Nice for me, that is. Not very nice for you. Why on earth would she give you such a thing? It's a fairly popular man's name in the nomad tribes in southern Barsaive, but I can imagine you'd be better suited for a more feminine one."

She nodded glumly. "Tell me about it. All the



other girls were named Assantia or Shossli." She took another sip of her juice and noticed that HIS mug contained ale. "Gorlitan sounds more like a trained blood monkey. Um, no offense."

"None taken. In fact, it's an ork word for 'enraged bear'. There were a lot of orks in our tribe. Plus a lot of angry bears. The name just caught on."

This wasn't exactly how Lita had envisioned her first meeting with her namesake. This man seemed like any other tavern owner. He did still look tough and spry, but his waistline was definitely expanding and he seemed more used to a bar rag than a sword. "Why a bow?" Lita asked. "Why not a sword, like you?"

Gorlitan seemed a little embarrassed by this.

"Well," he muttered. "I figured it would be safer for you. Take things out from a distance rather than getting right up close. I didn't think you'd grow up to be very big. Now, don't get me wrong," he continued, "You seem pretty fit now, but the last time I saw you I could have stuck you in my boot with plenty of room to spare. You must have eaten well."

Lita's world was falling apart around her. When she had first gotten the bow she spent months doing little else other than archery practice. Her mother had not approve of her activities. They may have saved our village, Momma said, but that doesn't mean everybody should go out and be a hero. A year ago Lita had left the village to track down her warrior namesake. Along the way she had met others proficient with a bow and learned all she could from them. She finally found another member of the Severed Fingers, a friendly elf in Kratas, who pointed her in the right direction.

"Are you saying I should just go back to my village, marry a farmer, and raise eight children?" Lita asked. "Well, forget it. I'm an adventurer now, thanks to your name and your gift, and I'll make a name for myself somehow."

Gorlitan finished off his mug and wiped his mouth with his sleeve. "Now, there's nothing wrong with farming," he said. "I've known many a ploughman more noble than most adventuring types. But where's the rest of your party?"

Lita blinked several times. "My party?"

"Yeah," said Gorlitan. "Traditionally, you meet a fellow wanderer a few days after you leave your village. Then you save a couple other people from certain death somehow, and you decide to travel together. You become strapped for cash, take up a dangerous mission with the promise of an ample reward, and your legend begins. You become fast friends and spend the next few years traveling around Barsaive risking your life for fame and fortune. Then you get fed up with adventure and you buy a tavern in some big city and retire. That's how I did it. Or your entire party dies in some hideous fight with a horror."

Lita thought back to the past year of her life. No real friends were made, to be honest. Nor enemies. A few casual acquaintances, some business agreements, but that was about it. In fact, she did remarkably little other than travel and train. "Umm... I don't really have a party. I prefer the solitary life." Yeah, that sounded good.

"What?" Gorlitan exclaimed. "Oh, that won't do at all. Who will watch your back? Who will hold off the enemies while you shoot them full of holes? Who will share the burden and help you spend the loot? Oh,

you definitely need a party."

"Well," she ventured, "How about you?"

The warrior seemed stunned. "Sorry, miss, but my adventuring days are over. I've been serving drinks for ten years now. I don't think I could hit an obsidiman's backside anymore."

"So, why send me the map?" Lita asked. "I thought it was an initiation quest or something."

Gorlitan leaned forward and frowned. "Map? What map? All I sent was the bow and the note."

"The map inscribed on the bow, of course. I don't understand the runes, unfortunately, but your elven wizard friend noticed them and translated it for me." With that, she pulled out a sheet of parchment and placed it on the table in front of Gorlitan. It was, indeed, a map of central Barsaive, with a large 'X' placed in the eastern foothills of the Tylon Mountains.

Now it was Gorlitan's turn to look stunned. "I never knew what the runes were," he stammered. "I just assumed they were for decoration. I never suspected they were important."

Lita pressed her advantage while she had it. "It's supposed to be a lost kaer," she said.

"Really?"

"Hiding the loot from dozens of old ork scorcher tribes."

"You don't say."

"With powerful monsters guarding it."

Gorlitan held up his hands. "Enough!" he cried.

"I surrender! I'll go with you." Lita suppressed the urge to jump up and hug him. "I really could use a little money," he mused. "This place needs some fixing up. Very well, I'll go with you on this one trip. But under my conditions."

Lita was happy enough to agree to anything right then, but she kept a serious look on her face. "Such as?" she asked.

"First," Gorlitan ticked items off his fingers. "You are in charge. I don't want the hassle of leadership. Second, you listen to my advice. I'll see to provisions and basic strategy until you are experienced enough to deal with it. Third, we need more people."

He leaned back and started thinking. "Old Elcima's an elementalist who drinks here a lot. She keeps complaining about how her apprentice could use a little 'hardening in the fire', as she puts it. Plus I know of a young hot-headed troubadour who would give his eye teeth for an adventure like this. Then there's Glent."

Something in his voice made Lita look up. "Glent?" She asked.

"The fellow you met when you came in here. He's new to the city and is looking for work. A nice fellow." Gorlitan gave her a grin. "And fairly handsome. But still a good hand with a sword. Any objections to Glent joining us?"

Lita leaned back and smiled. "Oh no," she said, "No objections at all."

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MAKE IT HAPPEN.

Wreck of the Thandos

by Dan Grendell

Lost in a storm while traveling through the Throal Mountains, the Adepts stumble upon the wreck of the Thandos, one of the four lost galleons of the Throalic fleet. After the storm abates, the Adepts are followed and attacked by several Dwarfs who are easily identified as members of His Majesty's Exploratory Force. Unbeknownst to the Adepts, a Captain in the Exploratory Force has also discovered the Thandos, and he has no plans to share the glory of his discovery with anyone. Things come to a head in Throal itself, with the Captain attempting to use his clout to eliminate the Adepts as a threat while they try to stay free long enough to tell someone what they found.

This is an adventure for 4-6 Adepts of Circles 2-3.

Setup

Several months ago, Captain Dhara of His Majesty's Exploratory Force discovered a barbaric tribe of nomads while exploring in the Tylon Mountains. The nomads, who had originally lived in the Throal Mountains, had apparently survived the Scourge unprotected by making unspeakable deals with a Horror. When they realized this, Dhara and his troops attacked and killed the entire band of corrupt and evil nomads as well as their patron Horror. The battle claimed the lives of nearly all of the Namegivers under Captain Dhara's command, however. Fearing disgrace for getting his men killed, despite the correctness of his actions, Dhara desperately searched for anything that could possibly redeem him. He found it, in the form of an ancient map to an area in the Throal Mountains that apparently housed some kind of treasure. Keeping his discovery secret, Dhara arranged to have himself transferred back to the Throal Mountains. Further research revealed to Dhara just what a treasure the map spoke of: the location of the

wreck of the Thandos! Determined to use the glory of such a find to counter the charges of ineptitude that he feared would not be long in coming, he and the remainder of his Tylon Mountain men have gone searching for the wreckage. The Adepts, possibly on a journey between Throal and Parlainth, are traveling through the the Throal Mountains when a sudden violent storm causes them to lose their way. Searching for shelter, they discover a somewhat secluded cave that opens into a huge cavern, wherein lies the Thandos. Any Air Sailor or Throalic dwarf will automatically recognize what it is, and anyone with a relevant Knowledge Skill can make a Test with a Difficulty of 7 to do so.

Event 1:

Waiting out the storm, the Adepts will likely explore the Thandos. Nearly everything inside is decayed and corroded. Inside the largest hold, the Adepts will find the lair of a group of fifteen hearty Mountain Krilworms, who will attack immediately.

Mountain Krilworms have the same stats as Krilworms (ED p. 306), save the following changes:

DEX: 4	TOU: 6	STR: 6
Attack: 4	Knockdown: 7	
Damage: 7	Death Rating: 35	
Unconsciousness: 27	Legend Points: 85	

In the Mountain Krilworm's lair, the Adepts will find a partially eaten logbook identifying the Thandos.

Event 2:

Upon the easing of the storm, the Adepts are likely to head for Throal to spread the news. Whichever way they go, however, they will be followed by one of Dhara's men Named Karis, which is standard procedure for Exploratory Force groups. Thief and Scout Adepts may make Perception Half-magic Tests with a Difficulty of 8 to notice the pursuit. Others may make a Perception Test with a Difficulty of 9 if they state they are watching for

pursuers or danger from behind. If he is not noticed, Karis will stop following after a day and report back to Captain Dhara. If he is noticed, Karis will reveal nothing unless the Adepts can convince him they are loyal to Throal, and even then he will not say much. His uniform clearly marks him as an Exploratory Force member, however, and he carries several notes about the area around the wreck in his pack.

Event 3:

Unbeknownst to Captain Dhara, patrols of Theran warriors from Triumph are also searching for the wreck, which Theran magic has told them is in the general area. Only small patrols are sent to avoid Throalic detection, generally about six people to a patrol. Their statistics match those of Guard Veterans, ED pg. 297. Each group will have a leader whose statistics match the Elven Archer Archetype, ED pg. 67. The Therans dress as members of the Exploratory Force to keep from being noticed, and this will likely make the Adepts very wary of Captain Dhara when they meet him later. The Adepts will encounter at least one of these patrols on their way to Throal, and feel free to add more if the trip seems too easy.

Event 4:

Upon entering Bartertown, the Adepts are accosted by a group of 6 Guardians who feel like exerting their authority, unaware until too late of the toughness of the Adepts.. The Guardians are mostly bluster, and will give up if given any serious resistance, screaming threats and promising that 'the lawbreakers will pay!'. If the Guardians are actually attacked, they will flee to get some friends and will attempt to kill the Adepts from ambush in houses and on roofs with bows and slings. This will be a group of about twenty. If the Adepts manage to get into melee combat with the Guardians, they will flee rather than fight. Perception Tests may be made to notice the ambush at a Difficulty of 12. The Guardians statistics match those in the Throal sourcebook, pg. 143. Any amount of money over 5 silver will be sufficient to buy off the Guardians if the Adepts wish to avoid a scene. If the Adepts allow themselves to be taken, they will be stripped of all belongings but clothes and placed in separate cells. The cells are dirty, but sturdy. Allow inventive attempts to escape to succeed. After 5 days, the Guardians will get bored and they will release the Adepts.

Climax:

After the Adepts free themselves (or if they are not captured), they are free to enter Throal itself. Everyone they ask will tell them to take the information to the Great Library. Upon doing so, they will be shown to a waiting room and asked to wait until a senior librarian can see them. Already in the room is a dwarf in Exploratory Force uniform. He is, of course, Captain Dhara. He will recognize the Adepts immediately if Karis was not killed, and spend about a half-hour giving them a steely-eyed glare. At the end of that time, he will suddenly cry out, and throw himself on his knees in front of the Adepts. He will beg for their help, apologizing profusely. This may surprise Adepts who did not figure out who he was! He will beg the Adepts to allow him to present the news as his discovery, giving them a sob story (all true) about how his life is going nowhere and he needs this boost to his career. He will not tell them what happened to his Tylon Mountain group. He will also offer to split the reward money with them. If questioned, he will tell the Adepts that there is a 1000 silver piece reward for such information. If the attempt on their life by the Therans is mentioned, his eyes will go very wide and he will become confused, denying all responsibility. He claims that there are no bands like that stationed near Throal in the Exploratory Force. What the Adepts do from there is up to them; if they take the credit, they are given 1000 silver (loot worth legend points) and are offered posts on the Exploratory Force. If they allow Dhara to take the credit, he will give them 500 silver (loot worth legend points) as promised, and offer them posts under him on the Force. The Adepts also earn an extra 1000 legend points for doing a 'good deed'.

Sequels:

If the Adepts help Dhara, they have made a friend for life who can help them whenever they are in Throal. If they accept the offers to join the Force, it could be a source of adventures for many sessions to come. Even if they don't, the quick bit of fame gathered by the discovery (or some good words from Dhara, if they let him take credit) could easily lead to several jobs exploring places for private individuals. There are many options open to the Adepts following this adventure.

The Fumble Table

An Expansion for the Rule of One

by Carsten Damm

he Rule of One in the Earthdawn rulebook states:

... If all the Action dice rolled to make a test show a result of one (1), then the Character automatically fails to accomplish the action, even if the total result is greater than the Difficulty Number.

For gamemasters and players who like the idea that something can go horribly wrong with an action, here is a fumble table to spice up the game, and not only during combat! Imagine the face of a thief whose lockpicks break off in the door ...

To use it, simply consult the section that fits the type of action performed (e.g. Combat, Thread Weaving). Find the number of dice the player used for that test, and describe the result to your players.

For example, Valiane the Wizard wants to Levitate herself onto the roof of a building. She rolls her Spellcasting Test, and all three of her dice come up with a 1. According to the Rule of One, Valiane failed to cast the spell, but her nasty GM has decided to use the Fumble Table.

The Type of her Action was Spellcasting, and she used three dice for the test. The GM reads the result listed under 3 in the Spellcasting section, and describes the result to his players:

“As Valiane waves her hands to cast the spell onto the ground under her feet, she suddenly realizes that the Levitation spell has the opposite effect! With a loud ‘Ouch!’, Valiane drops to the ground, as the extra gravity from the spell pulls her down (for the duration of the spell).”

Some results in the table might seem to be a bit harsh, especially those listed for 4+ dice. Since it is a rare occasion that a large number of dice come up with all ones, the result should be noticed. After all, the table is intended to add some flavor to the game;

most of the listed results can create funny situations. The GM should discuss with his players whether or not to use the table.

Action	Dice Used	Result
Combat	1	You drop your weapon. One Action to take it up again.
	2	Your weapon is damaged. Reduce the Damage Step by 1.
	3	You injure yourself. Roll damage.
	4+	You hit a member of your own party! Roll damage!
Interaction	1	They won't buy it (-1 step on your next test).
	2	They laugh at you (-2 steps on your next test).
	3	They not only ignore you, but will be totally cold on anything you suggest from now on (-3 steps on your next test).
	4+	You blew it! Now they are violently opposed to anything you might suggest. Hope you have not triggered the ork's <i>gahad</i> !
Perception	1	You have no idea what's going on.

	2	Not only do you not see what's happening, you are staring in a totally wrong direction!
	3	You see something that isn't really there. Hope you don't embarrass yourself over the mistaken identity.
	4+	You are convinced that every thing you do is right (but it's wrong).
Build/Repair	1	You can't get it together. (-1 step on your next test).
	2	You not only fail, you make it worse. You drop the tools you're working with, or you lose your grip and damage the thing you were working with even more. (-2 steps on your next test).
	3	That will be difficult. You broke something that is not easy to fix (-3 steps on your next test).
	4+	You damage the creation beyond repair.
Athletics	1	You slip and take a minor injury (sprained ankle, etc.). Take Step 2 damage.
	2	You damaged one of your limbs in the process (ED Companion, p.117). Take Step 4 damage.
	3	You made a complete fool of yourself. Take -2 steps on all Social Tests against people who saw you. Take Step 6 damage.
	4+	You managed to damage one of your limbs so badly that you take a Wound. Take Step 8 damage.
Thread	1	Your Thread was poorly

	2	For permanent Threads, the effect is negated until your Thread Weaving Rank is increased. For Spellcasting, your Thread has changed the original pattern of the spell. Clean your matrix or cast the spell to see what happens (GM option).
	3	The Thread becomes entangled with something. Reweave all temporary or permanent threads to this item (Legend Points are not lost).
	4+	Same as above, but you have to increase your Thread Weaving Rank first.
Spellcasting	1	Your Spell hits a member of your party. If you wanted this, the effect is reversed.
	2	The spell fails and your matrix is wiped clean.
	3	You manage to cast the spell on yourself. If you wanted to cast the spell on yourself, the effect is reversed from what you wanted.
	4+	The spell fails. Your matrix is damaged and cannot be used. Increase the rank of the Spell Matrix to fix it.

Rules Clarifications

by Lou Prosperi

he rules for Earthdawn are constantly being amended, expanded, and supplemented. Following are errata, explanations and corrections to the systems.

Disciplines, Talents and Half-magic

- Warrior half-magic cannot repair magical weapons and armor.
- Both Second Weapon and Momentum Attack can be used in the same combat round. Second Attack cannot be used with Momentum Attack, but Second Weapon has no such restriction.
- Here's a thought: How about a Momentum Attack Knack that allows you to use Momentum Attack after an Extraordinary success on a Second Weapon test?
- The Air Sailor's Durability is 6/5.
- Acrobatic Strike can be used in conjunction with Down Strike. The character uses his Acrobatic Strike step for the Attack Test. Down Strike is only used for Damage Tests, never for Attack Tests. Keep in mind that Acrobatic Strike cannot be used as the means for the character to get above his target, as is required by Down Strike. The character must use some other talent or ability (such as Gliding Stride) for this.
- The result of a Gliding Stride test is in feet.
- Windmasters can use Fearsome Charge with Dive Attack.
- The only restriction that's been placed on the Forge Blade talent is that it can only increase the Damage Step of a weapon by that weapon's base Damage Step, for a total Damage step of up to double the weapon's original. For instance, a broadsword can only be increased as high as Step 10, while a Dagger can only be up to Step 4, no matter how many weaponsmiths forge it.
- The Blood Wood sourcebook does not address the Shaman and Horror Stalker Disciplines for Blood

Elves. Since Blood elves have the same discipline restrictions as normal elves, they can follow these two Disciplines.

- Since the Jubruq may be of any other spellcasting Discipline, it seems appropriate that jubruq be able to follow the Shaman Discipline.
- Journeyman adepts can learn any talents from any discipline, **except** racial-only talents, such as those found in the various racial-based disciplines.
- Unlike all other racial-only disciplines, Journeyman adepts are not limited to 10th Circle. They can advance up to 15th Circle like most other disciplines.
- Journeyman adepts can choose one (1) talent as a Discipline talent at each Circle past 1st Circle, up to a maximum of 10 Discipline talents.
- Steel Thought replaces the character's *personal* Mystic Armor. For example, the character has a Willpower of 16 (granting him a natural Mystic Armor of 2) and is wearing Hide Armor (conferring an additional +1 Mystic Armor). The character has taken damage that is offset by Mystic Armor, and he rolls a 9 on his Steel Thought. He reduces the damage by 10. The result of a Steel Thought test replaces the character's *natural* Mystic Armor, which would then be augmented by his armor.
- The Mynbruje Questor power Increase Perception only boosts the character's Perception step number, not his Perception attribute value, which is the basis for Spell Defense.
- We've recently made some changes to the Claw Frenzy talent, outlined below:

Claw Frenzy

Step Number: Dex + Rank
Action: Yes
Skill Use: No
Requires Karma: Yes
Strain: 1 per attack
Discipline Talent Use: Beastmaster

The talent is the same as described (Earthdawn Rulebook, p. 100) **except**:

- ◆ The character must declare how many attacks he wishes to make each round, up to his Rank in Claw Frenzy.
- ◆ The character can continue to make attacks, up to the number he declared, until he misses one, at which point he can't make any further attacks.
- ◆ The character takes 1 point of Strain per attack **declared**, all at once, after all his attacks have been made.

Adventuring

- Rules for swimming and drowning can be found in *Denizens of Earthdawn* Volume I (p. 123).
- Orichalcum coins are worth 10,000 silver pieces each. They are extremely rare, are likely only available in the largest cities, such as Travar or Urupe, as well as in Throal and perhaps Iopos.

Spells and Magic

- The description of the First Circle Nethermancer spell Chilling Circle says it causes step 4 damage to everyone in the circle. This includes the Nethermancer who cast it.
- Grounding from the Astral Plane does not work in Earthdawn. Though there are similarities between the magical philosophy of Earthdawn and Shadowrun, they do not work the same in most cases, including this one. Given the preponderance of magical items through which spells and astral attacks could be launched, I think it's a good thing too!
- When a character becomes a Lightbearer, he swears an oath prohibiting him from the use of any type of blood magic beyond blood oaths. This includes blood charms. Thus if a character uses blood charms or blood pebble/living crystal armor, they would have to stop using them if they were to become a Lightbearer.
- The nethermancer spell Pass Ward can be set to allow certain people through, but doing so requires 2 points of blood magic damage which can't be healed until the spell's duration expires.
- The Target Portal spell gives a range of 1,000 yards. The magician does not need to see the target in order to cast a spell at the subject of his Target Portal spell. The spell is not affected by physical barriers. Example: a Nethermancer can cast a spell via Target Portal at a target on the



- other side of a building.
- The ED rulebook (p. 120, Versatility talent description) says, "A character *cannot* use the Versatility talent to purchase talents available to his own discipline." Since magicians all get the Spell Matrix Talent, human magicians can't use Versatility to purchase additional matrices. And

for those of you who consider spell matrices to be Discipline-specific, if you allowed, for instance, a human wizard to purchase a nethermancer spell matrix, that matrix could only be used for nethermancer spells, which would only be useful if the wizard also bought the Nethermancer version of Thread Weaving. For the record, according to the official ED rules, Spell Matrix talents are *not* discipline specific.

- A magician uses his Read/Write Magic talent to copy a new spell correctly into his grimoire, thereby learning the spell. Strictly according to the rules, a magician does *not* need his grimoire to attune his matrices, though requiring a grimoire to attune matrices under normal circumstances does make a lot of sense. If he reattunes on the fly, he does not need his grimoire. A failure when

reattuning doesn't necessarily wipe all the magician's matrices. Once a magician starts to reattune his matrices, he must continue attempting until he succeeds, or all his matrices are wiped.

- As for why magicians would carry around their grimoires, what about when they want to learn a new spell while traveling? Also, grimoires are very likely to become pattern items for magicians ... you wouldn't want to leave a pattern item in a not-so-safe place, would you?

Combat

- When attempting to 'Attack to Knockdown', the attack does not cause damage.

Karma

- If a character makes a test using Karma which is then subject to the Disrupt Fate dragon power, the character has to repeat the test, meaning he would make the test again *without* needing to spend another Karma Point.
- While Karma has dice Steps, Karma is not affected by Taunt. That may seem like a contradictory statement, but it's based on the intent of the Taunt talent, *not* on the literal reading of the rules.
- Does it take an action to make a Perception Test, and can you spend karma on it? The way I would rule it, if it is a "You notice this in passing" type roll, I allow no Karma to be spent, but the roll takes no action. If the character is "looking for something", then it



does take his action, though he may use Karma.

Magic Items

- Blood Pebble and Living Crystal Armor are immune from the Damage to Armor rules in the ED Companion.
- If you look at the number of Legend Points awarded for most Deeds, you'll notice that most often the amount earned usually covers the cost of either the Rank of the Deed, or the previous or following thread rank. The idea was to base the awards for Deeds on the number of Legend Points the character needs to spend to purchase the Thread Rank at which he performs a Deed. For instance, in the cast of the Counterspell Staff, the award of 1,300 Legend Points covers the cost of the Rank 4 thread, plus part of the Rank 5 thread. A similar situation exists with Nioku's Bow. The 61,000 Legend Points earned for the Rank 7 Deed are the exact amount needed to purchase Rank 9 and Rank 10 threads.
- There is no skill for weaving True Elements. This task is performed by half-magic. I would suggest that there are half-magic adepts who are enchanters, who specialize in producing magical items, especially the more common types of items such as fire starters, hot pots, etc.
- Counterspell Staves become effective against additional disciplines at Ranks 3, 4, and 5. This is in addition to the Effects listed.
- The Rank 3 ability of the Amulet of Dirac Tol Amarra (Mists p. 98) to work as a Healing Potion for 1 point of strain is supposed to be limited to once per day. The character cannot heal as many Wounds and take as many Step 8 Recovery Tests as they want.
- The Earthdawn rulebook section on Thread Weaving makes a distinction between Test and Research Knowledges. The Companion, when it discusses weaving threads to pattern items, implies that simply using Item/Weapon History to uncover Key Knowledges is all that is necessary to weave threads to the item. The difference lies between weaving threads to magical items and weaving threads to pattern items. Essentially, all pattern items have the same basic Test Knowledge, namely: "How is this pattern item significant to its subject?" Where the difficulties in using magical items come largely from learning their key knowledges, the difficulties in using pattern items center around obtaining the item

(which is often difficult as pattern items are **not** easily identified), and then determining the significance of the pattern item to the subject.

- The system for determining the Spell Defense and Thread Rank cost of a magical item is based on the Learn/Dispel Spell Difficulty Table (p.156 of the Earthdawn rulebook). Locate the



item's Spell Defense on this table, and find the Circle that corresponds to the Spell Defense. The cost for Thread Ranks comes from the Talent Rank Cost Table (p. 221) based on that Circle. For instance, an item with a Spell Defense of 13 would be Circle 5. Thread Ranks for that item would start at 200 LP, and increase according the Circle 5-8 column on the Talent Rank Cost Table.

In some cases, Thread Rank costs may be adjusted based on the Spell Defense. The Spell Defense may be adjusted based on the Thread Rank cost. The deciding factor is usually the Thread Rank cost, based on the significance of the powers of the item in question.

The cost for Thread Ranks should *always* be based on one of the columns on the Talent Rank Cost Table. Every magical item published by FASA conforms to this.

Throal

- Using the straightest route possible, it is roughly six miles from the Grand Bazaar to the Great Library of Throal, and eleven miles from the Grand Bazaar to Yistane, the closest of the Inner Cities. In case you missed it, there is a fold out map in the back of Throal which shows the layout of the kingdom. As a reference, the entrance to the kingdom at the Gates of Throal is one mile across.
- Keep in mind that the listed salaries for members of the Eye of Throal/Exploratory Force are for per day in which the character is actually working, not just every day. Player character members of either group would only be paid when on an assignment. Also, remember the tax structure of Throal. Rich citizens pay 45% in taxes to the kingdom, while Average citizens (which generally includes player characters employed by the government) pay 20%.
- There is no direct correspondence between the Barsaive months and those we currently use.

Thera and the Thera Empire Sourcebook

- On the map, Rugaria province is considered part of Vivane province. The province is still there -- it just was lumped into Vivane province for the map. If you look at the Military Postings tables (p. 17 - 18), you'll notice that Rugaria province is listed.
- Arancia is discussed (briefly) in the Talea section of the Thera Empire sourcebook. Arancia is **not** a Thera province, but a kingdom that is loosely associated with the Thera province of Talea. The King of Arancia also claims parts of Talea as his.

Leafers

- A Leafer speaks its racial tongue, Leafer, no matter where it lives.
- Leafers can use Claw Shape.
- Fire has the same type of effect on Leafers it has on other Name-Givers... it hurts!
- Leafers do not have any sort of natural armor.
- Leafers are bipedal plant creatures. Their bodies are plants. They do not grow back cracked or broken limbs.
- The sourcebook says that Leafers can survive in captivity up to 40 years. They have a normal life span of up to 100 years or so.



